SEPTEMBER 2000

NEA Today

The Magazi cation Association

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See page 23 for details

Sharon Williams

is confident she's going to get help from home this year. Are you?

See page 8

NEA Today

september 2000

Volume 19 • Number 1

COMING IN
the October
NEA Today

A special four-page section comparing Al Gore and George Bush on the issues that matter most to kids and public schools.

Mark Wallheiser/Silver Image

COVER STORY

Getting Help from Home

page 8

When the 650 students and staff of Florida's Ensley Elementary come back to school, they'll be met with solid support—from parents! Ensley Elementary, according to the Florida PTA and Department of Education, has forged the best parent connection in the state. What about your school? How close is your connection with parents?

Cover photo by Mark Wallheiser/Silver Image

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Letters

TEACH TOLERANCE

I was disturbed by Barbara Joan Grubman's attitude in the (May) Debate over teaching tolerance in school. Yes, attitudes are formed in early childhood and throughout a child's life at home. However, we must never underestimate the impact a teacher has on a child.

In my very diverse school, when I encounter intolerance of other cultures from children, parents, or even other teachers, I model respect for everyone. My students learn from me that everyone is important. I say it with words and I say it with my actions.

Schools are, without question, a place to teach tolerance. For some students, school is the only place to learn this important lesson.

Rebecca Hall
Mayfield, Ohio

BOOM FOR WHOM?

Hats off to Tamara Sober Giecek and *NEA Today* for the piece on economic reality (My Turn, May). Rather than remain subservient to big business, perhaps someday public education will provide the "system of checks and balances" the corporate-controlled government has failed to maintain, if it ever existed.

Carl Johnson
Bloomfield, New Jersey

MARRIOTT MARKS

In your report card (News, May), you gave Sodexho Marriott Services a "remove from school grounds." As a former employee of Marriott, I can't agree more.

Sodexho has a negative impact on school staff, the school plant itself, the town, the budget, and, most important, the children. It's not just a union issue.

Sodexho does nothing but try to make as much money as possible. They know that once a district fires its own employees and signs a contract with Sodexho, it's hard to go back.

They start with lunch service and keep on going—is teaching next? *Beware* and keep your eyes open, please. The kids count on us.

Todd Shaw
Toms River, New Jersey

SIGNING BONUSES

On April's Debate about districts offering bonuses to attract new teachers, I say, "Great idea!" Let's draft teachers via a bonus. If they can do it in baseball, why not the teaching leagues? While we're at it, we can trade teachers with other schools and institute a reserve clause to protect tenured educators. The only thing missing would be a lucrative salary and outstanding pension benefits. Ah, to be part of the pro ranks!

Gerald Lunderville
Long Beach, California

I was dismayed that Virginia Hoover thinks new teachers need signing bonuses to buy materials for their classrooms (Debate, April).

Teachers accept that buying things for their classrooms with their own money is part of the teaching life, but this should not be so. Do accountants provide their own pencils and paper? Do telemarketers provide their own telephones? Someone needs to stand up and say, "No more!" If not us, who?

Leslie Lewis
Richmond, Virginia

The reason for the difference in opinion between the two April Debate writers can be summed up in two words: Collective bargaining.

Bob Kaplan in Illinois has it; Virginia Hoover in North Carolina does not. Having lived and taught in both states, I can attest to the difference collective bargaining can make.

Signing bonuses are not a bad thing in and of themselves, but as a solution to the problem of teacher hiring and retention, they are a junior-sized bandaid on a problem that requires major suturing.

My spouse's relocation precipitated my move to North Carolina. A signing bonus tacked on to my $12,000 pay cut wouldn't have made it much more palatable.

North Carolina has the goal of reaching the national average in student test scores and teacher salaries. It's a worthy, if rather sad, aim: to be average. With collective bargaining, one has a tool to reach a great deal higher.

Denise Nelson
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

I take offense at Bob Kaplan's contention that new teachers are a "risky investment" who do not deserve signing bonuses. I am a senior special education major who will be a new teacher in 2001.

Am I going to be such a risk because I lack experience? Just because a seasoned teacher has managed to stand the test of time and survive in the system does not mean he or she is earning his or her paycheck. Take a look around the teacher's lounge tomorrow and you'll probably see an example.

Next semester I will pay full tuition so I can work 40 to 60 unpaid hours a week as an intern. I will survive by working another job at night and taking out more student loans.

Let's dispense with the "us vs. them" mentality. By the way, Mr. Kaplan, I am a card-carrying, dues-paying member of Student NEA.

Byron Beasley
Winter Springs, Florida

In the April Debate, Bob Kaplan said it is unfair to give new teachers signing bonuses because they are not even members of the union yet. This is very untrue!

Perhaps Mr. Kaplan is unaware, but each state has its own student affiliate on college campuses. I am vice-president of the University of Evansville chapter of the Indiana Student Education Association. By the time I take my first job in the fall of 2003, I will have been a member of NEA for four years!

We pay dues just like every other member. We work closely with local affiliates in our areas to voice our opinions as pre-service teachers on education issues. We participate in activities in our communities, especially in the schools where we teach.

Stacia Mumfrey
Evansville, Indiana

THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY

I agree in principle with the theme of your cover story titled "Beyond Taco Tuesdays" (May). And I agree with President Chase that we must meet the challenge of educating an increasingly diverse student population by teaching tolerance and respect for differences and by working to eliminate racism and discrimination.

However, "celebrating" diversity is a misguided choice of words. Respecting and appreciating diversity, yes. But celebrating diversity, no. Celebrating diversity implies emphasizing and taking pride in our differences. If we start out with that approach, we've already discriminated. Let's celebrate the common bond that makes us all human. Let's celebrate our unity, not our diversity.

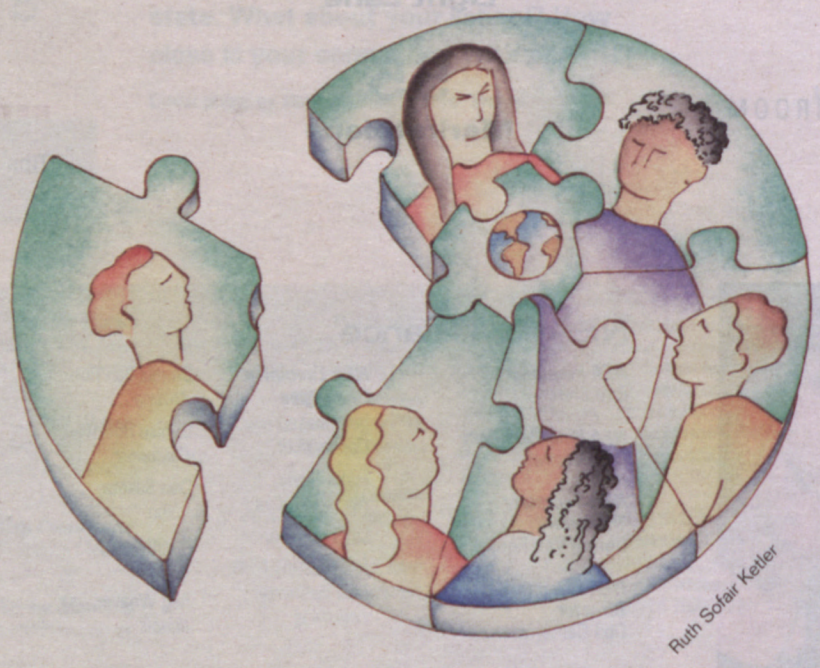
Larry Wood
Joplin, Missouri

In your recent issue, which focused on diversity, you made reference in several articles to people "of color." All people are people of color. No one is transparent, we just come in different shades.

Several articles gave statistics on racial backgrounds, but not one article mentioned multiracial or biracial. Instead, the articles continued to lump people into broad categories: Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, white. You did not mention the trend of mixed marriages. Do not multiracial children count?

Let us remember the words of President John F. Kennedy, "Race has no place in American life or law." We need to get beyond racial classifications because they are blurring rapidly. Children do not see race; they see human beings. It is we adults who teach them differently.

Mary Qualler
Elm Grove, Wisconsin


Ruth Sofair Ketler

LEAVE IT AT SCHOOL

It is clear that Millie Brooks (Letters, April) is not yet employed as a teacher. If she were, she would realize that most teachers are well-educated, hard working, and caring individuals who deserve a reasonable salary.

Teachers should not be labeled "money-hungry" for expecting to earn a professional wage. Higher salaries attract a larger pool of qualified candidates.

Also, not even the least competent teacher's day ends "at 2:55." Most teachers have meetings before, during, and after school several times per week. There is lesson planning to do, student work to look over, school functions to attend, committee participation, parent conferences, professional development workshops, and more. Just wait until Ms. Brooks experiences her first weekend report card extravaganza!

Teaching is not a job for lazy folks. People entering the field with slothful notions do not last very long.

Regarding giving out phone numbers to students and parents: I don't believe I should be "on call." That doesn't make me uncaring, it makes me sane.

Susan Fuhr
Goshen, Connecticut

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- By mail: Write to Letters, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
- Through the Web: Go to www.nea.org/neatoday and click on "Submit a Letter to the Editor"
- By E-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org
- By Fax: 202/822-7206
- By Phone: 202/822-7201

Letters are edited for length and clarity.

NICE JOB

Wow! An article relating to the theatre. It was with great pleasure that I opened the last issue of *NEA Today* to find information regarding "the Bard" (Problems and Solutions, May). Being a new theatre teacher (as well as a new member of NEA!), it is great to see drama being covered.

The recent push for standards in social studies, math, and English overshadows many electives. So this is to thank you and encourage you to continue your coverage of electives such as drama. Bravo!

Bill Johnson
Portland, Oregon

EARLY DOOM

I was disappointed with "Doomed Before Kindergarten?" (FYI, May). As a speech-language pathologist who also holds birth-to-kindergarten teacher certification, I felt that this article seriously downplayed the importance of high-quality, early childhood experiences.

From the tone of this article, one would assume that as long as someone speaks a few words each day to a toddler or preschooler, there should be no long-term ill effects.

My 15 years of teaching experience indicate that nothing could be further from the truth. Early works and is more cost efficient in the long run.

Thousands of certified teachers are devoting their talents to working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. I have always felt that they were woefully neglected by the NEA. In the future, I hope the NEA will not choose to publish articles that so blatantly disregard the contributions of these dedicated teachers.

Paula Joines
Sparta, North Carolina

BAD IDEA

Since this is only my second year of teaching, I anxiously read columns that give advice and share ideas. But I was appalled by one teacher's solution for disruptive students (April).

The fifth grade teacher from Ohio stated that he writes the disruptive student's name on the chalkboard, and if the same student misbehaves again, "the student must write a prepared sentence 50 times per check."

What a fine classroom management system if teachers want students to associate inappropriate behavior with writing!

I believe a call home to the parents is a much more effective solution than a "prepared sentence."

As a high school language arts teacher, I attempt to motivate students with writing assignments. Writing assignments should never be issued as a punishment.

Julie Ollmann
Green Bay, Wisconsin

NOTABLE NOTES

As a middle school computer applications teacher, I deal with notes every day. But instead of being passed between desks (My Turn, April), they are sent and received via E-mail. My challenge is to keep students from sneaking on-line during class. The "carrot" I dangle is the promise of free time if our classwork gets done.

I have little control over the content of these messages, but I am happy that my students are so comfortable communicating electronically. It is a skill they will use when they are working adults.

Caroline Fosbenner
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

WAL-MART BACKER

I am upset that you folks gave Wal-Mart Stores an "F" (News, April). What does the unionization of Wal-Mart have to do with NEA or even education? I don't support most unions! The *only* labor union I will support is the Hawaii State Teachers and the NEA. For the most part, labor unions are bad for the economy and hurt the competitive spirit of America! George Bush is my man for president!

Anthony Arakaki
Aiea, Hawaii

President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE

The *Real* Choice

When it comes to making a choice, America's parents, in overwhelming numbers, choose public schools.

As the political campaigns heat up in the weeks ahead, expect "school choice" to become a big issue from coast to coast.

We know what some politicians mean by "choice." They mean taxpayer-funded tuition vouchers for private and religious schools. But in Florida—the first state to enact a statewide voucher system—parents are learning the hard way that this "choice" is a fraud. Nearly 93 percent of private and parochial schools in Florida have refused to accept any voucher students. Some choice!

May I state the obvious? The "choice" that parents really want is the choice to send their children to high-quality public schools in their local community. Tellingly, nearly 85 percent of the most affluent families (the highest-earning fifth of families nationwide) choose to send their children to public schools. These are folks who have the financial resources to send their children to the best possible schools, whether private, parochial, or public. In this competitive marketplace, the public schools win, hands down.

"Families in disadvantaged neighborhoods don't want the false 'choice' of vouchers."

But let's be frank. Yes, the majority of public schools in the United States offer a rigorous academic program and are staffed by highly qualified teachers (studies show that public school teachers, overall, are more experienced and better educated than their nonpublic peers).

But it's also true that many public schools—especially in poor, inner-city and rural communities—are struggling badly. Teachers in these high-poverty schools often lack certification. The school buildings are crumbling. Student achievement is low.

How do we lift up these schools and the children they serve? Once again, the voucher advocates just don't get it. Quality education has nothing to do with whether a school is private or public. What counts are high-quality teachers, modern facilities, rigorous academic standards, rich parent involvement, plus the resources to offer individualized assistance to kids who need help. What counts is the political will to create high-quality schools in low-income communities.

Connecticut has the right idea, beginning with its uncompromising quest for quality teachers. Says the *Washington Post*: "Connecticut and its local school boards provide some of the highest teacher salaries in the country, mentors for every new teacher, exhaustive checks of classroom competence, extra help for the lowest-performing schools, early intervention with poor readers, and a rare patience and consistency." The result: Connecticut leads the nation in reading, writing, and math scores.

Families in disadvantaged neighborhoods don't want the false "choice" of vouchers. They want the real choice to send their children to quality public schools in their local community.

Most middle-class and high-income families already have the choice to send their kids to high-quality local public schools. It is time to make this choice available to every American family.

To that end, let me say how deeply I appreciate your commitment to quality public education and to enriching the lives of young people. Yes, you can expect that some politicians will try to score points by bashing public schools and impugning your professionalism. But I urge you to keep your eyes on the prize. Never forget how incredibly important your work is. As educators, you have the power to touch the future in extraordinary ways. And you do! Have a great year!

Comments? You can E-mail Bob Chase at BobChase@nea.org. If you'd like a response, please include your name and NEA local.

Linda Arnade Protected Her Community From Water Contamination

That's Why She's a Prudential Spirit of Community Honoree

When Linda Arnade, 17, of Palm Bay, Florida, read that septic tanks posed a threat to drinking water in her community, she took action and organized the testing of 400 wells. Linda then launched a public awareness campaign to alert her neighbors to the risk when the tests showed water contamination. That's why she's a 2000 Prudential Spirit of Community Honoree.

Do you know a young person who deserves recognition? Prudential created the Spirit of Community Awards in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals to honor young people like Linda in every middle and high school for outstanding community service. And right now, we're looking for award candidates for the year 2001. If you know a young person who's made a difference in your community, we want to hear about it.

Awards are given at the local, state and national level. Principals in every middle and high school in America will be receiving information and applications from NASSP in September. Local Honorees are selected in November and become candidates for statewide honors, a $1,000 prize and a trip to Washington, D.C. At a special ceremony in the nation's capital, ten National Honorees will each receive a $5,000 award, a gold medallion and a crystal trophy.

"When you volunteer, you don't just help other people—you also enrich your own life."

Linda Arnade
2000 Prudential Spirit of Community Honoree

Help us find next year's honorees! If you know any volunteer-minded students, encourage them to apply. The application deadline is October 31, 2000. For more information, call **1-888-450-9961**.

Applications will also be available in September on the Internet in the **Community Involvement** section at **www.prudential.com**.

National Association of Secondary School Principals

Prudential

This program is supported by the American Association of School Administrators, the Council of the Great City Schools, the National Middle School Association, the National School Boards Association, the National School Public Relations Association, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and the National 4-H Council. The Prudential Insurance Company of America, 751 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102-3777.

Subbing: A Most Wonderful Time

A Pennsylvanian finds subbing so rewarding, she's decided to teach full time.

BY GAIL DAWSON-WHITE

John Whitehead

February 1999. I quit my job as a vice president in community development banking. For the previous 25 years I had worked in social services and banking, but the changing face of banking, the constant turmoil of merger after merger, had made each day a struggle. I quit without a plan for my future.

Then I read a local newspaper story about the desperate need for substitute teachers in area school districts. The schools were calling for people interested in becoming "guest professional teachers"—individuals paid at a daily rate to substitute at a specific academic level.

Back in 1964, as a college student, I had planned to become a teacher. But I changed majors in my sophomore year. Now I thought about teaching again. I submitted my resumé to the Reading school district, and, six months later, I was called in for a three-day training session.

I chose to teach in local inner-city schools for several reasons. I'm committed to diversity in education, I'm bilingual, and I had actually worked with this particular inner-city school system as a community banking officer.

At the beginning, I was able to shadow elementary teachers in one of our premier city schools, my first opportunity to learn about classroom management and everything else from the school system's specialized reading program to the library system and curriculum.

With my certificate as a substitute finally in hand, I was called in to teach K through fifth grades. I worked four to five days every week until the last full day of school.

In every city school I worked, the welcome was sincere—and often overwhelming. Each school had unmet daily needs for substitutes.

The school principals made a point of meeting me and stopping in each day. Teachers on each side of my classroom helped by "inviting" especially disruptive students to spend time in their rooms, and they filled me in on any scheduling or special changes.

I found the classroom lesson plans that teachers left to be consistently excellent. They reflected considerable effort by teachers to provide a quality day for their students while they were gone.

The school district provided me, for each of my assignments, a substitute information packet. This was completed by each classroom teacher, and in it was all sorts of useful information on the room and building protocol: how to use the phones, the fire drill procedures, which child would be a reliable helper, the daily schedule.

I always found myself spending lunchtime in my classroom, trying to get ahead in planning the afternoon's lessons and writing up the morning for the teacher. I guess I was just too excited, at the start, to eat!

In many of my elementary classes, the children assumed that I must be either the mother or sister of their permanent teacher—or why else would I be there to care for them!

The kids also consistently told me that I looked like their permanent teacher. I would always glance at the regular teacher's photo. I would see that, of course, I really didn't resemble her at all.

I especially enjoyed the bilingual elementary classes. On April Fools' Day, I spent a little time explaining this custom, which doesn't exist in Puerto Rico or Mexico, and gave some examples of jokes.

By 10 a.m., students were telling me that I had a spider on my shoulder or that they heard we had early dismissal that day—all because they understood the holiday and its pleasures. The students appreciated that I spoke another language.

At one point, I also taught junior high school students in our alternative discipline center. We read poetry by Emily Dickinson and Langston Hughes. They loved *The Ballad of the Landlord*. They understood the injustice of discrimination.

The Latino boys were especially taken with Emily Dickinson's life of isolation. She must have been very shy, they felt.

What especially excited my fourth and fifth graders was my experience with organ donation. I had given a kidney to my husband, and I value the opportunity to talk to any group about the power of donation. In one school, I'm now called "the Kidney Lady."

My greatest regret, as a day-to-day substitute, was what I would miss with the children the next day, when I'm not there—all the extras I thought I could bring to the lessons we began.

The year of substituting was such a wonderfully positive experience that I'm now at Alvernia College in Reading, Pennsylvania, working on my elementary school certification.

My coursework will take me 18 months to complete, and I'll then be back in the schools full time. I currently have a 4.0, and I'm the only grandmother in all of my classes.

Life experience has given me such a powerful edge, and the experience of working as a guest professional has made my classes here at Alvernia College much more alive and understandable. I have lived what the teachers are discussing.

Wish me luck in my new career!

You can reach Gail Dawson-White at wyowhite@gateway.net.

Welcome to a brand new school year! As you page through this first issue of the year, you'll find just a few major changes in the organization and design of *NEA Today*.

You'll notice, for starters, that we've expanded our health coverage, from one page devoted exclusively to student health issues to two pages of student and adult health and fitness tips and features. Obviously, your health and fitness are just as important as the health of your students. This change acknowledges that fact.

Bill Fischer
editor

Our two-page *Bits & Bytes* spread is now a single-page *Tips for the Wired Classroom*. But, rest assured, you won't see any diminution of technology-related coverage.

We simply concluded that consigning classroom technology stories to one two-page section was artificial and unnecessary. So look for stories on technology applications throughout each *NEA Today* issue.

We hope these changes make *NEA Today* more valuable to you, and we'd love to know your opinion of them.

Like to share your comments? You can reach us at NEAToday@nea.org. Please let us know what you think!

Looking ahead, we've planned what we think will be a provocative and practical array of cover story features for the coming year.

Next month, for instance, we'll be zeroing in on the November elections and what's at stake for children and public education.

In the months after that, we'll be tackling issues like paperwork and high stakes testing. We'll help you prepare for next year's Read Across America celebration, and we'll highlight efforts to help older students who have difficulty reading.

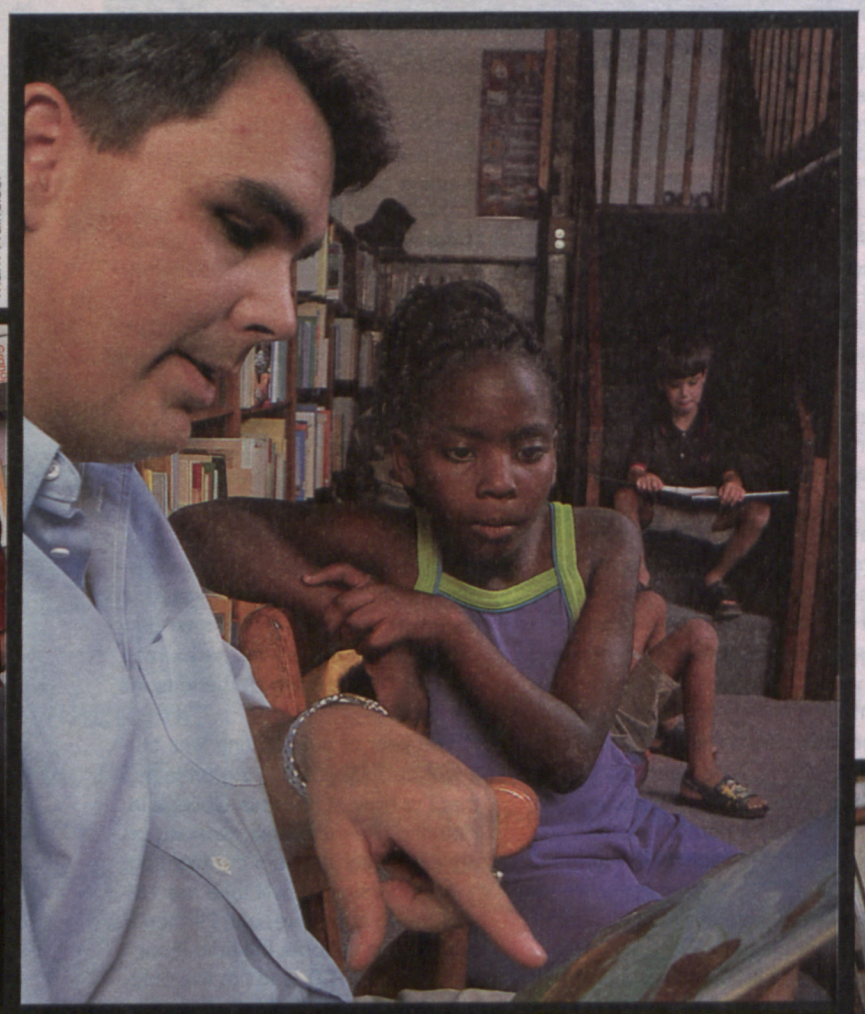
We'll also be examining the coming impact of wireless technology in education, the emerging new roles of school support staff, and the importance of minority teacher recruitment.

We're excited about the new year—and hope you are, too!

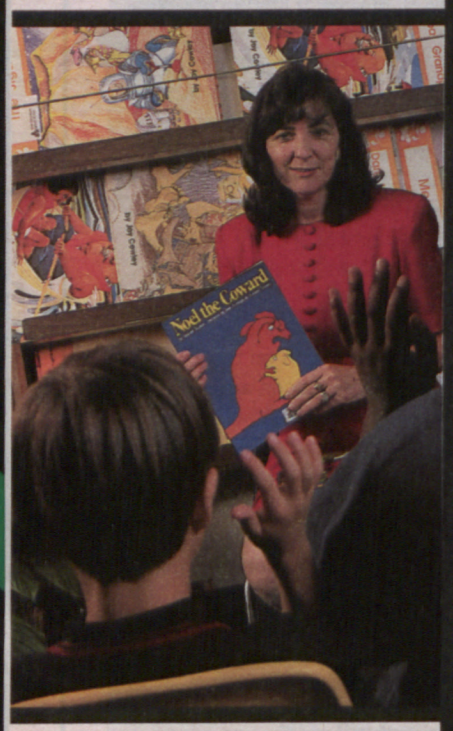
Bill Fischer

Getting Help from Home

As you launch into a new school year, don't forget one of your most important resources for student success: parents! Take a lesson from NEA members who know: Parents aren't just for permission slips anymore.



Mark Walheiser



At Ensley Elementary in Pensacola, Florida, classes taught by NEA members like Sherry Wright, above, train parents to help kids raise test scores. Dad's Club volunteers read to kids and help beautify the school grounds.

In theory, everybody acknowledges the critical link between parental involvement in school and student success. Practice is often a different story—but not at Ensley Elementary in Pensacola, Florida.

"Our heart is in our families," says Judy Miller, the NEA member who coordinates the Ensley Parent Resource Program.

"Our goal," adds Miller, an administrative clerk, "is to nurture strong family-school relationships that invite our children and parents to experience school together."

At the 650-student Ensley Elementary, after-school classes teach parents the computer skills they can use to participate in their children's learning. Another set of classes, held monthly, train parents how to help students who score poorly on achievement tests.

And all parents are welcome at the school's Parent Resource Center, which lends books and learning aids.

Initiatives like these, says Miller, are successfully involving—in a positive way—over half the school's parents *more than once* during the school year. That impressive statistic helps explain why the Florida Department of Education and PTA last year named Ensley Elementary's parent involvement program as the state's best.

NEA member Judy Miller, standing, staffs the Ensley Elementary Parent Resource Center.

Could your school forge a parent connection as close as Ensley Elementary's?

Probably. Faculty and staff at Ensley face barriers to active parental involvement as high as any school's.

For starters, the school sits in Florida's Escambia County, one of the nation's poorest. Some 83 percent of Ensley students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and the local student turnover rate typically runs 47 percent a year.

Given realities as harsh as these, faculty and staff at Ensley Elementary understand that they need all the help they can get.

"We know the whole climate of the school depends on parents getting involved and buying in," says teacher Gail Husbands, who works closely with Miller.

A Family-Focused Approach

What's the best way to bring parents on board? You start, advises Ensley's Judy Miller, by finding out exactly what parents want.

And if you want to know what parents want, you just ask them. That's what they do at Ensley Elementary. Each year, an annual survey of Ensley parents becomes the foundation for an aggressive, multi-faceted outreach effort.

After analyzing parent survey responses, staff at Ensley slate and publicize a year's worth of monthly parental enrichment seminars on topics ranging from helping children cope with divorce to understanding truancy laws and state achievement requirements.

These seminars attract as many as 225 parents at a time. They're held both during the day and in the evenings—and are even videotaped for later checkout from the school's Parent Resource Center.

Last year, Ensley began free, on-site GED classes to encourage adults in the community to complete their high school educations. The classes, organized by a first grade teacher and the school's retired cafeteria manager, enrolled 21 parents, and the program's first graduate now also volunteers in the effort.

"If children know their parents value education, they'll value education too," says third grade teacher Sharon Williams.

Another initiative sparked by Ensley's annual parent surveys is the school's Dad's Club.

"The club began as a way to involve dads and non-custodial dads," says Miller. "We have so many children who suffer because they lack a positive male figure in their lives. And dads wanted their kids to know it's not just moms who care about school."

The club's 37 dads and granddads currently mentor kids, volunteer in classrooms, initiate school fundraisers, and host teacher appreciation events. They installed the school sprinkler system, replaced a ramshackle wire fence with a welcoming brick entranceway, and acquired billboard space to affirm that "Real Men are Real Dads."

The Ensley parent involvement program was originally funded by a variety of small grants and donations and relied on volunteers. Then the school board started noticing the impact of the program on student learning.

The result? Three years ago, the board approved the use of Title I funds to staff the Parent Resource Program, which now includes Miller's paid position, a part-time salaried parent, and a county-paid elementary resource teacher.

Arlene Costello, the president of Escambia's NEA local affiliate, credits the success of Ensley's parent involvement initiative to staff attitudes.

"We consider schools a community learning environment," says Costello. "Parents are welcome."

The local helps out by purchasing books for the Ensley Parent Resource Center and providing volunteers.

What's ahead for the Ensley program? Staff will provide childcare for GED courses, hire an after-school counselor, and set up a school-based immunization program.

Does getting help from home really make a difference?

"Our parents are our advocates," says Miller. "When we took the time to really focus on families, we created a win-win situation for the school, families, community, and, most importantly, the children." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

Toolkit

The Ten Worst Ways
To Make a School Parent-Friendly

Is your school helping parents feel welcome? Or is your school mindlessly following habits that are sure to turn parents off? If any of the practices below sound familiar, it's time to rethink how your school works.

1. During back-to-school night or parent conferences, insist that parents squeeze into tiny tot furniture.
2. Hold all meetings during the day.
3. Alternate from blitzing to boring communications.
4. Lock the doors, turn off the lights, and take the phone off the hook no later than 4 pm.
5. When parents show up at meetings, try to make them feel as out of place as possible.
6. Design a report card that reads like a legal notice.
7. Make absolutely certain teachers never introduce themselves until late in October.
8. Instruct secretaries never to welcome parents when they arrive at the office.
9. Post welcoming signs at your doors and offices: "Violators are subject to a $500 fine or six months in jail or both."
10. Open parent meetings by making it clear that you are much more intelligent than they can ever hope to be.

A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

Do you and your school have a plan for getting the help you need from home and the community?

The National PTA is encouraging schools to consider a framework for thinking about school-family partnerships developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University.

NEA members across the nation are already translating this framework into practical, school-based initiatives, as the examples below make clear.

Parenting

Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

"Our parent report card lists 19 items we suggest parents work on at home—limiting TV, encouraging cultural understanding, helping students with homework. Parents who check off seven or more items are commended in our newsletter."

—Jean Campbell-Kuhn
Galax, Virginia

Communicating

Design effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school and children's programs.

"Our home visit team includes teachers, a counselor, and a nurse who visit to discuss school programs. The focus is not on academic performance, so it's more relaxed."

—Patricia Lee
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Learning at Home

Provide information to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

"Our family literacy program allows first graders to borrow books and cassettes to use at home. Even parents who don't have high literacy can participate in their child's education."

—Debra Carnes
Federal Way, Washington

Collaborating

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Our "St. Pete Reads" program trains parents and other community residents to help increase literacy among disadvantaged students."

—Elaine Davis
St. Petersburg, Florida

Volunteering

Recruit and organize parent help and support.

"For parents who volunteer regularly, I hold workshops on how to read and write with young children, as well as how to handle problems or answer young kids' questions."

—Becky Dixon
Bloomington, Indiana

Decision Making

Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

"As part of our Kids Vote program, political candidates speak on issues like the school budget. We ask families to write questions, and this gives kids a sense of real issues. One year, our work actually helped raise voter turnout 8 percent."

—Maggie Mahland
Windsor, Connecticut

For more information, contact Dr. Joyce Epstein at Jepstein @csos.jhu.edu or visit www.partnershipschools.org.

For the current PTA National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, visit www.pta.org/programs/pfistand.htm.

Q&A

The Family Community Connection

Bill Fischer

Warlene Gary coordinates the NEA Family-School-Community Partnership Program. We asked her to talk about her partnership efforts.

Why is involving parents in schools so important?

Parents are a child's first teachers. Educators have a responsibility to teach children, but we can't do it alone. Neither can parents. In order for children to succeed, everyone in the community has to partner together.

How can schools cultivate good relationships with parents?

First, schools should send a message to parents that they are welcome. Second, schools need to understand the community they serve, make sure they are visible, and be willing to connect with families in nontraditional places, like the library and community center.

It also means involving parents in decision-making, listening to parents' concerns, being willing to make adjustments, and helping parents choose an appropriate educational program for their children.

What strategies really help increase family support for schools?

Simple steps make a difference, from greeting visitors and answering phones in a friendly, courteous way to offering orientation for new families.

Other ideas? Provide an area where visitors can easily find out about school policies, curriculum, and events. Invite parents to visit the classroom. Plan informal get-togethers.

And provide alternative methods of reaching parents who speak limited English so they, too, can participate.

Do minority parents have special concerns?

Minority parents often claim they feel treated differently because of their color, a lack of education, or how they talk or dress. Misperceptions result from a lack of cultural understanding and clear communication.

We need to put children in the center and then figure out what to do together.

What's NEA doing to support partnership efforts?

NEA provides family-school-community training for affiliates and parents on how to work together; coordinates a national family community network with key contacts in every state; and disseminates resources and funding information for special projects. ✔

For more, neaui11@aol.com.

Why Parents Don't Get Involved

Over half of American parents surveyed—55 percent—acknowledge that lack of parental involvement in schools is a major problem. What's behind the low involvement? In a recent survey, 30,000 PTA leaders cited "lack of time" as the main reason parents don't get involved in their children's education. The "Ozzie and Harriet" household of 1960, in which 92 percent of families had two parents and mom stayed at home, is clearly no longer the norm.

Single-parent households with children ages 6-12 and households with two working parents.

	% single parent	% working parents
Alabama	31	60
Alaska	26	58
Arizona	28	48
Arkansas	28	63
California	26	44
Colorado	22	53
Connecticut	27	47
Delaware	31	58
District of Columbia	62	50
Florida	31	56
Georgia	28	53
Hawaii	26	58
Idaho	19	56
Illinois	27	49
Indiana	22	59
Iowa	23	59
Kansas	27	55
Kentucky	25	51
Louisiana	35	49
Maine	23	53
Maryland	26	53
Massachusetts	26	45
Michigan	28	47
Minnesota	23	57
Mississippi	35	68
Missouri	26	59
Montana	24	52
Nebraska	22	58
Nevada	27	60
New Hampshire	24	50
New Jersey	22	48
New Mexico	32	45
New York	32	41
North Carolina	29	62
North Dakota	19	62
Ohio	26	47
Oklahoma	27	54
Oregon	27	53
Pennsylvania	24	43
Rhode Island	28	52
South Carolina	31	54
South Dakota	23	65
Tennessee	29	57
Texas	26	56
Utah	14	43
Vermont	24	53
Virginia	29	57
Washington	26	52
West Virginia	25	52
Wisconsin	23	58
Wyoming	26	58

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation and U.S. Bureau of the Census

RESOURCES

■ **Kick off the school year by joining the America Goes Back to School Campaign. Free kits are available for NEA members who want to know how families, communities, businesses, and educators can all work together to improve schools. To order, call 877/433-7827. For general information about the America Goes Back to School Campaign, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit www.ed.gov/Family/agbts.**

■ ***Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs* is now available from the National PTA. $18.95, plus $3.95 s&h, from the National Education Service, 1252 Loesch Road, Bloomington, IN 47404, or call 800/733-6786. www.nesonline.com.**

■ **Find peer advice and other helpful resources on the Web site for the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE). For coalition updates, a weekly news update, and links to education-related Web sites, visit www.ncpie.org, or call 703/359-8973.**

■ **The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, created by the United States Department of Education, offers information about the importance of building a community of learners as well as guidance about available grants and free resources. See www.pfie.ed.gov.**

■ **The Family Education Network offers free print and online issues of the *Family Education Today* newsletter, featuring tips on everything from discipline techniques to helpful Web sites. Check www.familyeducation.com.**

■ ***In School and in Life—The Best Gift You Can Give Your Child*, the newest addition to the Megaskills curriculum series by Dorothy Rich, shows parents how to teach their children the social skills needed to succeed. $14, plus $3 s&h, from the Houghton Mifflin Co., 215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003. 212/420-5800.**

■ ***Engaging Families and Communities: Pathways to Educational Success* outlines strategies to create and maintain family and community engagement programs. Features a comprehensive index of partnership organizations. $23.95, plus $4 s&h, from the National Community Education Association, 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91-A, Fairfax, VA 22020, or call 703/359-8973.**

■ **The *Together We Can* Toolkit, created by the New Jersey Education Association, trains members to present family-school-community workshops. Contact your local UniServ office.**

Is school fundraising worth the time and effort?

CONNICE ROSS ***teaches special education at Germantown High School in Germantown, Tennessee. A teacher since 1979, she currently sits on the board of directors for the Shelby County Education Association and has served as a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.***

yes

Teachers are tired of being nursemaids, secretaries, janitors, medical technicians, wardens, bookkeepers, and vendors. Bell time is often consumed with what seems like a hundred housekeeping tasks.

The last thing we need is the hassle of coordinating the sale of a bunch of overrated junk. The question is, "Are school fundraisers worth the time and effort they take?" You bet they are!

Fundraisers have transformed my classroom program from one that is merely adequate to one with a variety of opportunities for students to grow and excel.

As a teacher in a brand new, self-contained program, I was overwhelmed to find a classroom with only three boxes on the shelves. Browsing the special education catalogs brought on a severe case of sticker shock: $150 for a tooth brush assembly kit, $500 for a reading program, $45 dollars each for board games. My budget for the year was $300!

My classroom is now overflowing with supplies and equipment: numerous kits, a reading program, a touch window for the computer, teletrainers, and more!

Our bonanza started with a Christmas gift sale and has become a classroom business, Functional Skills Inc.

We use a marketing strategy that incorporates vocational skills, math, language, and community-based instruction, and we shop for supplies to make or creatively package products.

Students help plan and produce advertising, including a full-color brochure. We keep inventory and balance our account complete with statements of gross income and net profit. We end each project by deciding how much to reinvest, purchasing targeted items, and planning a fun reward!

The class doesn't just earn money. The students learn a variety of skills and move toward meeting performance standards.

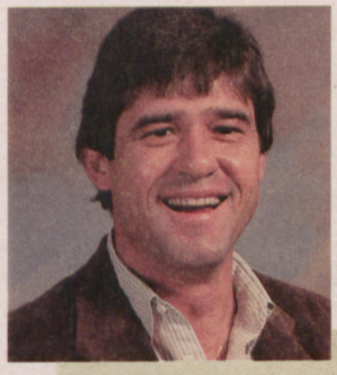
Other students know and support our efforts, and our program has gained recognition from the community. I have formed liaisons with community leaders and spend much less of my own money.

Until there is no longer a need for schools to raise money, educators should look for ways to make sales focus on more than finances and to shift responsibility off teachers and onto as many shoulders as possible.

Here are some suggestions:

- Encourage each child to contribute time, energy, and ideas.
- Provide a service for the community and school.
- Cut out the middle man.
- Be creative. Do something unusual. Hold a sale of student art or a matching plant flower sale, where customers buy plants for themselves and school flower beds.
- Limit fundraisers to a few quality events each year.
- Stress teamwork.
- Share responsibility with parents, grandparents, business leaders, and the community at large.

Fundraisers are a must for many schools. For others, they help make the difference between being adequate or being exceptional. Until every school is an exceptional school let's keep fundraisers, and let's make them fundraisers that raise more than dollars. ✔



DEL PATTERSON ***teaches seventh grade geography at Sapulpa Middle School in Oklahoma. A teacher with 26 years' experience, he has also served as an NEA local affiliate president, an Oklahoma Education Association delegate, and a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.***

no

In a recent conversation with my state senator, I was taken aback when he iterated a checklist for spending some $2 billion Oklahoma will receive from tobacco settlement monies. You probably know what words came tumbling out: prisons, highways, bridges, industry, veterans. Not one word about public education.

Is it any wonder why Oklahoma educators feel compelled to compete for consumer dollars by using children as the source of labor?

If you can say "exploitation," you probably already have a good idea about what's wrong with the ubiquitous activities called "fundraisers" that are occurring in a classroom near you.

The scenario goes something like this: An assembly is called, and students get pumped up and tantalized by the flashy rewards they can win for exercising their Amway-like sales skills.

Then, of course, daily classroom interruptions follow ad infinitum while students, from pre-schoolers to seniors, busy themselves selling entertainment discount books, chocolate bars, tulip bulbs, sausage, and greeting cards.

These students are being used. They usually receive a cheap carnival-like toy for their labor, while the profiteers and the school haul in lots of cash.

The rationale for entrenching such marketing programs at a place called school defies logic. Imagine the headline: *High School Band Wins Bid to Perform at Super Bowl!* Are band members rewarded for their hard work and proficiency as musicians? No, they must "sell, sell, sell!" in order to be rewarded. Bring forth the fundraiser!

There are, of course, other major concerns we as educators should take into account before we send our children into the fundraising frenzy:

- Safety. It doesn't take an IQ over the temperature of table water to grasp the safety risks of students selling door-to-door.
- Time off task. By playing the fundraising game, we allow more time to hemorrhage away from the subject areas we teach, all in the name of commercialism.
- Extra duty. As if we aren't already work-saturated, fundraisers pull us away from our real mission—helping the child, teaching the lesson.
- Student self-esteem. An inordinate number of students arrive at school unable to buy lunch, let alone goods from fundraisers. Yet we let schools create cultures that press these students to buy, buy, buy.

I find it repugnant that schools are signing exclusive agreements with cola companies or Channel One to help fund education, but using children as a means to line the pockets of marketers, just so a school can buy more basketballs, is even more inimical to what schools should be about.

We have lost sight of the operative word in public education, and that word is *free*.

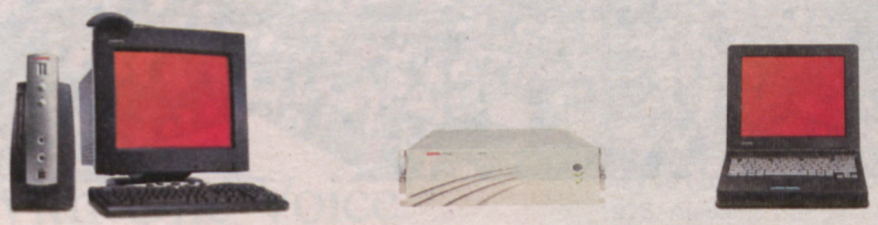
Upon ending that recent conversation with my senator, I reminded him, "One day, our schools will have all the money they need, and the Air Force will have to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber." Alas, as our talk broke up, no student showed up to sell him a jar of jelly. ✔

What's Your Opinion?

Is school fundraising worth the time and effort?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Is school the best place to teach tolerance?
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today:*
47% Yes **53% No**

Not too long ago, a room full of wired kids was a bad thing.



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Paul Tanedo

It's Time to Uncork the Bottle

This Congress has bottled up legislation vital to children and public education, like common-sense gun control. We need to elect new people.

If you need just one reason to put pro-education people in Congress and the White House this November, listen to Colorado art teacher Patti Nielson, one of 30 people shot at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999.

Nielson spoke this past spring on Mother's Day before 750,000 participants in the Million Mom March in Washington, D.C.

"I am outraged," she said, "that in the year since the Columbine tragedy, Congress has done nothing to protect our kids from gun violence. *Nothing!*"

Nielson was just one of many NEA members at the march, proudly wearing "Moms+NEA=Keeping Kids Safe" buttons in a demonstration that offered front-line educators their second opportunity in a week to push Congress for common-sense gun control legislation.

Just five days earlier, on National Teachers Day, NEA members Andy Pope and Arlene Thomas spoke at a Capitol Hill press conference on experiences that convinced them of the need for curbs on child handgun possession.

Pope, a world history and geography teacher at Chadron High School in Nebraska, told reporters about what it was like to be shot in the chest in 1995 by a 13-year-old student in his class.

"My oldest son, Mitch, was in the classroom across the hall when I was shot," he shuddered. "A 13-year-old should not have access to a handgun."

Thomas, a school law enforcement officer at Camden High School in New Jersey, agrees.

"Sometimes at my school we use a hand-held metal detector, but kids have many ways to go around detectors," she noted at last spring's news conference. "We need to stop the guns from getting in their hands in the first place."

Added Thomas: "We need roadblocks against those who buy 50 guns at a time and sell them on our streets, and we need child safety locks to prevent a child from accidentally firing a loaded handgun at another child."

Many of these concerns are addressed in S. 254, the Senate bill now stalled in conference committee.

This legislation, if enacted, would require background checks at gun shows and pawn shops, outlaw juvenile possession of semiautomatic weapons, require child safety locks and devices on new handguns, and ban imports of high-capacity ammunition magazines.

Joining Pope and Thomas last spring were NEA President Bob Chase and pro-public education lawmakers from both parties, including Representative Michael Castle, a Republican from Delaware.

"Gun safety and school safety are not partisan issues," Castle said. "We need to send a message to our congressional leadership that we want to work the will of the American people and enact these safety measures as soon as possible."

NEA's Chase was blunter yet: "No more delays, no more excuses. The time has come for every lawmaker to put kids and their safety first."

But delays and excuses are gumming the machinery of Capitol Hill, where common-sense gun control—along with reauthorization of the Elementary and

Paul Tanedo

"Until we figure out what turns people into killers and how to prevent it, we cannot make it so easy for them to get guns."

—Columbine High teacher Patti Nielson, at the Million Mom March

Congress's inaction on child gun safety prompted many NEA members to join last spring's Million Mom March.

Secondary Education Act, federal aid for school modernization, and money for emergency school repairs in high-needs districts—have been deliberately stalled by congressional leaders.

"Broad educational policy changes are unlikely to happen this year," says NEA lobbyist Joel Packer. "The failure of Congress to address the needs of kids and schools is proof that we need to elect more pro-public education lawmakers this November."

A reminder of all that's at stake in November 2000:

■ **The offices.** Up for grabs this year are the Presidency, the entire U.S. House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate, 11 gubernatorial seats, and control of several state legislatures.

■ **The issues.** Whoever's in charge at the federal and state levels will set the tone for public education in areas ranging from special education funding to teacher recruitment and retention.

■ **Your future.** This year, you'll hear lots of debate on proposals that affect *you*—from vouchers to Social Security privatization. Stay tuned. ✔

For more information on important education legislation now stalled in Congress, go to www.nea.org/lac/.

IN THE STATES

'We'll Be One, With One Voice'

In Florida and Montana, state affiliates of NEA and the American Federation of Teachers have moved closer together over the past decade, overcoming rivalry to battle against never-ending attacks on public education.

Step by step, the organizations found new ways to collaborate. They drafted common legislative programs, worked together to elect the same pro-education candidates, and even shared professional development activities.

The final step came this past spring. The NEA and AFT affiliates in both Florida and Montana joined to create new "dual" NEA-AFT affiliates, with newly elected officers and merged staffs. These unique organizations follow the precedent set by Education Minnesota, a dual NEA-AFT state affiliate formed in 1998.

A progress report from Florida and Montana:

■ In Florida, the newly unified NEA and AFT state affiliate, the Florida Education Association, is the largest union and professional association in the state, with almost 120,000 members, including K-12 teachers, support staff, and higher education faculty.

"This merger comes at a time when our members and our public schools are under heightened political assault," the organization's new president, Maureen Dinnen, told the Florida Education Association's founding convention.

"Right-wing groups in Florida have launched vicious and well-orchestrated campaigns to dismantle public schools and dismantle our unions," Dinnen added. "The new FEA will be a bigger, stronger, and more effective voice for quality public schools and public education employees."

The new Florida NEA-AFT affiliate faces two immediate challenges: the nation's first statewide voucher law and a right-to-work environment coupled with a weak bargaining law.

But the new Florida Education Association is fighting back. It's mobilizing members for the November elections and pursuing an anti-voucher lawsuit, recently upheld by a Florida Circuit Court judge.

"We're working hard to recruit and maintain members and train them to be active members and local leaders," says FEA staffer David Clark.

■ In Montana, the new dual affiliate, MEA-MFT, has already become a key force in state politics, with 16,000 members organized across the public sector.

Montana's largest union by far, MEA-MFT's membership ranges from K-12 school employees and higher ed faculty to Head Start and health care employees.

Facing unprecedented assaults on public education, NEA and AFT affiliates unify in Florida and Montana.

The new union, which speaks for employees in job titles from custodian to wildlife biologist, includes "almost one out of every 30 voting Montanans," stresses MEA-MFT Vice President Jim McGarvey.

MEA-MFT will be counting on those numbers this November, when every statewide elected office will be up for grabs.

"In Montana, we're seeing hard economic times and a retrograde political environment," reports MEA-MFT President Eric Feaver. "There's a significant anti-government bias and a movement toward privatization. It's been tough on public teachers and other public employees."

This environment, he adds, demands greater cohesiveness among the players "because legislators like to divide us."

Concludes Feaver: "You can't have a strong union in one place without a strong union in the other. When we stand before the legislature, the governor, and the Board of Regents, we'll be one, with one voice. Our interest is good government and quality public schools."

Heroes & Zeroes

Alabama Education Association

▲ **This year, these and 20,000 other members of the Education Support Personnel Organization—an arm of the Alabama Education Association—are celebrating ESPO's 25th anniversary. And they've got a lot to celebrate. Back in 1975, Alabama ESP had no job protection, retirement, leave, or other basic rights.**

But by working through the Association, these support staffers today enjoy a fair dismissal law, full leave and benefits, and even two guaranteed ESP seats on the Teacher Retirement System Board.

▼ **Using a loophole in Michigan's charter school law, the St. Clair Intermediate School District has created four loosely regulated "academies" and is moving teaching positions to them. "These academies," reports UniServ Director Steve Smith, "have the same curriculum, books, desks, and job sites as the intermediate district—and if the transferred teacher is willing to take a pay cut and become an unprotected 'at-will' employee, he or she is put in front of the same students!"**

For information on what *you* can do, go to www.mea.org/design.cfm?p=2882.

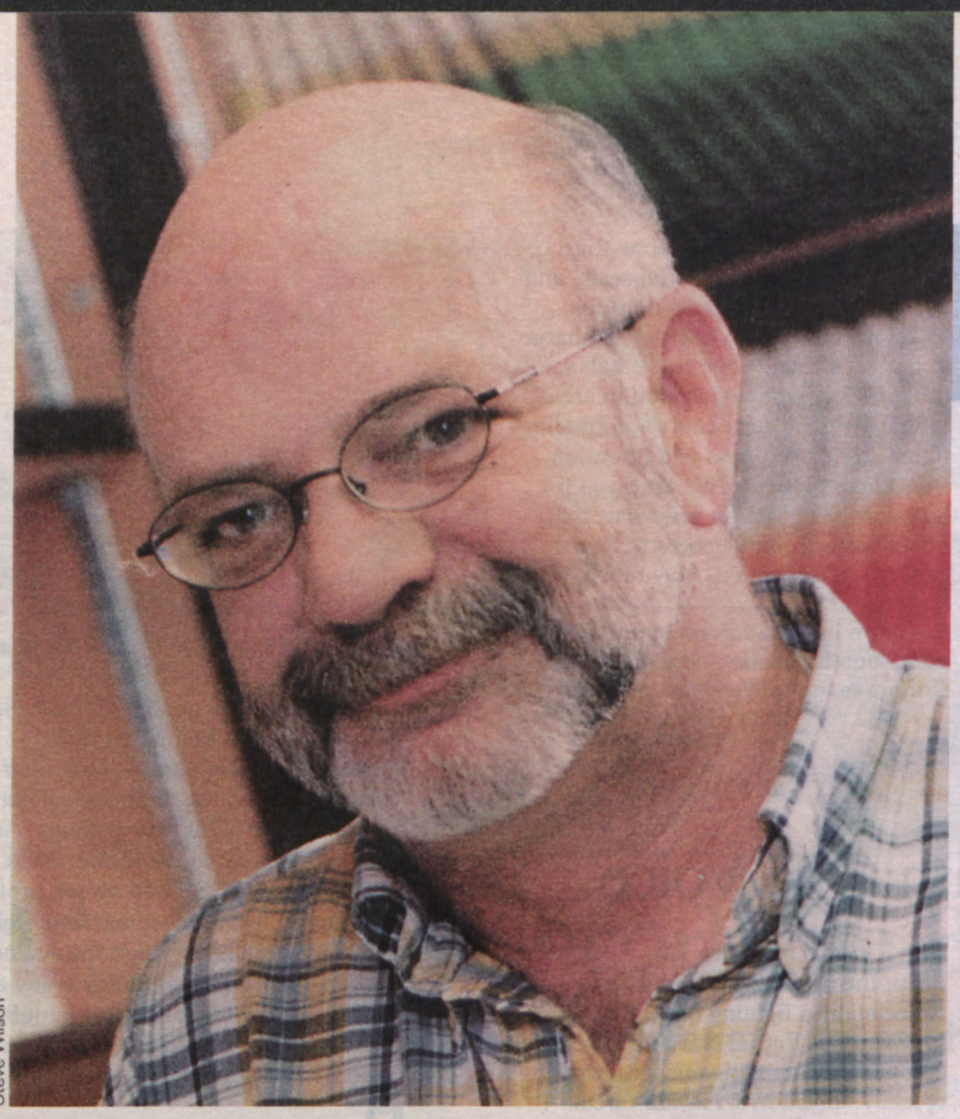
▲ **Michelle Petrillo, a special ed teacher at School #3 in Belleville, New Jersey, calls her visiting speech/language therapist, MaryAnn Zizza, an "unsung hero." When working with students with multiple disabilities, Zizza "always displays patience and enjoyment in all they accomplish," says Petrillo.**

And in the general ed setting, this 30-year veteran does everything from direct a student play on the Holocaust to update School #3's Web site.

"After school," Petrillo adds, "she works for the Association as well and represents our faculty and staff in all endeavors!"

▼ **In Canada, the government of Ontario Premier Mike Harris is ramming through legislation that extends teachers' time in class, requires school employers to disclose educators' "personal information" to the provincial Minister of Education, and turns what were once voluntary endeavors—from coaching to cultural activities—into mandatory "co-instructional" duties.**

Principals can assign such activities 24 hours a day, all year long, anywhere in the world—and refusal to comply can result in a court fine of up to $5,000. For Ontario updates, go to www.otffeo.on.ca/.



Steve Wilson

Tom Little: "Each teacher must get out and say, 'I am a professional and we deserve the best for our kids.'"

My Story Is This: Utah Students Deserve *More*

By going public, Utah NEA members win one of the largest school funding increases in a decade.

At first glance, professional life couldn't be better for Utah first grade teacher Tom Little and his teaching team colleagues Linda Page, Joani Richardson, Sandra Siiten, and Jodi White.

Once a week, the five plan together. They talk every day, sharing great ideas for reaching students—and they enjoy the support of a principal who keeps up school morale and hunts for grants.

"I work hard every day to get kids to read, write, and survive in life," says Little, a 23-year veteran. "I get great support from parents—I can't use all the people who volunteer—and I make an impression on the kids, solving problems before their parents do!"

But take a harder look at Altara Elementary, in the Salt Lake City suburb of Sandy, and you'll find each of these five teachers struggling to provide students with books, pencils, ditto paper, and glue on a supply allowance of approximately $225 a year.

To fill the gap, Altara teachers each spend $500 to $1,000 out of pocket a year for basic supplies and special project needs.

Yet, for all their sacrifice, the school still doesn't have a decent library. Or textbooks each student can take home. Or sufficient books for Tom Little's guided reading exercises.

You'll find similar money problems in schools across Utah. Kids face everything from tattered textbooks held together with tape to the nation's highest class sizes—in spite of a booming state economy.

Fed up with per-pupil spending that has slid to 61 percent of the national average, Beehive State NEA members swarmed into their communities and legislature during the last school year to push for more classroom dollars.

Their hard-hitting communications and lobbying campaign yielded Utah's biggest annual school funding boost in almost 10 years, 7.2 percent or $113.4 million. The increase kicked in July 1.

Even now, as the new money starts to filter through school districts, the Utah Education Association is setting its sights on a bigger target: Reach the national per-pupil average in 10 years.

If any organization can reach this goal, it's the UEA. With precision and discipline, this 18,000-member NEA affiliate has focused an entire state's attention on pressing school needs and turned hundreds of NEA members in Utah into "citizen lobbyists."

In the last legislative session, UEA worked with NEA staff to boil down public polling data into a crisp lobbying message that dramatized Utah's needs for individualized instruction and up-to date textbooks for every student, safe learning environments, and a quality teacher in every classroom.

NEA technicians then produced six unscripted TV spots featuring panels of Utah teachers, students, and citizens talking about school and teacher needs.

UEA Communications Director Mark Mickelsen credits this NEA field assistance for "keeping UEA 'on message,' from our president down to the classroom teacher, and helping us save money for other needs."

Some of that freed-up money went for radio spots, billboards in the Salt Lake Valley, T-shirts, car window stickers, lapel pins, and 15,000 yard signs—all with the winning message, "Utah Students Deserve More."

But no amount of NEA expertise could substitute for the involvement and energy of Utah teachers, who suppressed a very real urge to strike in favor of simply telling their story.

Among the venues where UEA members spoke about the needs of schools:

■ **In the streets of Salt Lake City.** UEA members rallied twice in front of the state Capitol with their distinctive red-and-black "Utah Students Deserve More" signs. Last October, some 2,500 of them captured the whole state's attention by marching—

THE BOTTOM LINE

CRIME: Sending youthful offenders into the adult criminal justice system increases their rearrest rate as much as 50 percent, note new studies in Florida, Minnesota, New York and Pennsylvania. For more: www.aypf.org/mendel/index.html.

HOUSING: Some 3 million full-time workers now make so little from their jobs that they must either live in dilapidated housing or spend half their income on rent. For more: www.nhc.org.

LIVING WAGE: Over 50 business leaders have signed a new Living Wage Covenant, pledging to pay their own employees at least $8 an hour. For more: www.ufenet.org/press/living_wage_report_pr.html.

PRESCHOOL: Only 20 percent of Hispanic children under age 5 are enrolled in early childhood education programs. That's less than half the rate of Black children. For more: www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/Hispanic/rr/ech.html.

arms linked with parents, students, and other representatives of the education community—from Capitol Hill through downtown streets to the site of the UEA annual convention.

■ **In the community.** Backed by data from UEA headquarters—and supported by school principals and district superintendents—teachers engaged both parents and leaders of community groups in dialogues on school and professional needs. "If I saw parents in the hallway of my building, I talked to them using information from UEA," says Sandy teacher Tom Little. "I never feared not knowing what I was talking about."

■ **In the state legislature.** Little, an area rep for the Jordan Education Association, used "off-track" days from his year-round school to monitor legislative committee meetings and call in grassroots UEA lobbyists as needed.

"Teachers are very knowledgeable about the issues, so I reminded them that legislators are no different than us and need to know the facts," Little recalls. "So high school teachers, for instance, would talk to lawmakers about class sizes of 30 to 40 and ask, 'How do you give individual attention to these students?'"

■ **In both political parties.** "Hundreds of our members took personal days to lobby, and many of them came back to UEA saying things like, 'You wouldn't believe what this guy said to me,'" reports UEA President Phyllis Sorensen.

"Members found that some of the people that they had voted for didn't stand up for children," adds Sorensen. "As a result, hundreds of UEA members later got themselves elected as precinct chairs, vice chairs, and convention delegates in both the Republican and Democratic parties. Their goal: get more teacher-friendly candidates elected."

The lesson from the Utah lobbying victory?

"Teachers have to be politically involved and let people know what's going on," says Tom Little. "Each teacher has to get out and say, 'I am a professional and we deserve the best for our kids.' People respect what teachers think and say!" ✔

"I think Utah students deserve a chance to succeed. If we had more materials, we would have a chance to be more successful."

—Utah student in a TV spot produced by NEA

For more info, check the Utah Education Association at www.utea.org.

Do'ers Profile

■ **Name and profession:** Barbara Keim, high school business teacher

■ **NEA local affiliate:** Billings (Montana) Education Association

■ **Latest accomplishment:** Earlier this year, Keim ended a seven-year term on Montana's Board of Public Education, a challenging—and nonpaying—job she held while teaching five classes a day at Skyview High School in Billings. This NEA member dedicated her term to making the board more "visible" and open, to everyone from classroom teachers to the state Board of Regents.

"I answered phone calls, explained why we made the decisions we made, and promoted an understanding of what the board actually does," she points out.

During Keim's tenure, the board revised state standards and adopted new performance-based accreditation standards for schools that provide for improvement plans and local flexibility and creativity in meeting those plans.

The goal throughout: Protect Montana's cherished tradition of local control, while maintaining the state's high level of student achievement.

As the sole front-line educator on a panel dominated by former school board members, Keim's greatest contribution was her insight on matters like the need for school librarians or the tendency of some administrators to understate class sizes. "Sometimes," she recalls, "I'd say, 'You don't get it. I'm in the classroom and here to tell you what's going on!'"

BARBARA KEIM

■ **Words of wisdom:** "Teachers need to stand up, be professional, and to look and act the part. And they need to step outside the classroom and participate in local committees, to present our side on what's going on in the classroom. If we don't step up to the plate, somebody else will.

"We need to let people know about the many positives in education, and the fact that teaching is not a nine-month job, but a 12-month profession."

(To contact Barbara Keim, send E-mail to Keimb@billings.k12.mt.us)

Facts & Figures

Ninety-Five Percent of Utahans Can't Be Wrong

Some 95 percent of Utah citizens say it's "important" that their state representative support funding for public schools. And 83 percent say they would be less likely to support a candidate for state representative if he or she did not support public education.

(Source: 1999 poll commissioned by the Utah Education Association)

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

Four Steps for Fuller Funding

How can NEA activists win needed resources for public schools? Some free advice from the Utah Education Association:

1 Don't "plan from your guts." "Use public polling and constant data gathering to shape an effective message," advises UEA President Phyllis Sorensen. "You need to know if you're on the right track or if you need to tweak your message."

2 Make your message personal. "Teachers are too used to picking up the burden for supply shortages and other needs," adds Sorensen. "They need to start telling their own stories to parents, policymakers, and the public. They're really very good at it!"

3 Keep the information flowing. Throughout its successful campaign to boost state education funding, UEA kept local leaders and members up to speed—and "on message"—through constant communications to building representatives and a 23,000-member school employee listserv.

4 Show your best side. UEA sent a cadre of 10 former Teachers of the Year across Utah to talk about the needs of schools.

"These high-profile, credible people were specially taught about our message," reports Sorensen. "They were recognized by policymakers and the public as teachers from their area, perhaps someone who had influenced or coached their kids."

CAR SAFETY: One of every six high school students has never worn a seatbelt, and one in three acknowledge riding with drivers who have been drinking alcohol. For more: www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss4905a1.htm.

DEPRESSION: The percent of teens who have thought about committing suicide has dropped from 29 percent in 1991 to 21 percent, according to the Urban Institute. For more: www.urban.org/family/TeenRiskTaking.html.

ALL-LEVEL SCHOOLS: Only about 3,000 of the nation's 90,000 public schools will open their doors this fall to students all the way from kindergarten to 12th grade. For more: www.nea.org/publiced/edstats.

DISTANCE LEARNING: One of every 10 NEA members working in higher education has taught a course via the Internet, and three-quarters of these feel positive about the experience. For more: www.nea.org/he.

Earning Respect Through Numbers

With grassroots lobbying, Kentucky ESP win new supporters—and passage of eight key bills.

Photos by Gary Emord-Netzley

In Daviess County, Kentucky, NEA local affiliate President Martha Hall, left, and Vice President Collin Allen organized members to deluge legislators with phone calls and E-mails during the 2000 session. The result: legislation that closes the ESP benefit gap with teachers.

Educational support personnel in Daviess County, Kentucky, were awestruck. There on a video—made by their NEA state affiliate—was state Representative Larry Clark openly clashing with lobbyists for Kentucky's school boards and administrators.

The setting: a winter legislative hearing on an Association-backed bill to give ESP the same 12-month retirement credit enjoyed by Kentucky teachers.

The video showed one of the lobbyists grumbling that the retirement bill's 16-year, $29 million price tag was a "sizeable, immediate, unexpected, and unprepared-for cost to school districts."

"We heard two years ago you didn't have the money, and we heard it two years before that," shot back Representative Clark.

"If you needed big raises for superintendents, you'd be here to find the money somehow," the Louisville legislator snapped. "We have discriminated against classified employees long enough. Well, you're going to have to *find* the money this time!"

After viewing this and other video clips of Kentucky lawmakers speaking out for ESP earlier this year, a roomful of Daviess County support staffers "started cheering," reports school bus driver and local affiliate President Martha Hall.

"Those legislators were talking about how important we are and how, without us, the schools wouldn't run—we never hear that," Hall says. "Recognition is sometimes worth as much as other things."

But you can't feed a family on recognition alone. That's why the 4,000-member Kentucky ESP Association teamed up with lawmakers earlier this year to pass eight bills that build on the momentum KESPA started in 1998—when it won 10-month retirement credit for classified employees and an ESP job security law that has since produced a 90 percent decline in terminations.

This year, KESPA closed the ESP benefit gap with teachers on using and banking sick leave. The NEA affiliate also won on retirement eligibility, gaining 12 months of service credit for ESP and ending the unjust requirement that classified employees must work 27 years to receive 20 years of credit and retirement medical benefits.

Grassroots KESPA lobbyists also won legislation that promotes student transportation safety, salary equity at Family Resource and Youth Service Centers, and tuition-free college education for ESP employees in "secondary area technology centers."

Finally, KESPA persuaded state lawmakers to create an Interim Joint Committee to study "inadequate and non-competitive" ESP salaries and report back during the next state legislative session in 2002.

"We'll testify before this committee," says KESPA President Nancy Toombs, "and bring along stubs of 13-cent and $6 paychecks that were eaten up by health care premiums, to show that our members—many of whom are single parents—can't survive on full-time salaries of $8,000 to $11,000.

"Our goal," adds Toombs, head custodian at South Heights Elementary in Henderson, "is to get the legislature to earmark money for adequate ESP raises, the same as it does for teachers."

KESPA has registered big progress legislatively in 2000 despite a daunting challenge: For the first time in 100 years, Kentucky's House and Senate are controlled by different parties.

"There was tremendous infighting and many bills were dying daily," notes KESPA Executive Director Dick Dickerson.

How, then, did a union of underpaid, under-recognized school support staffers successfully move *eight* bills?

Some clues:

■ **KESPA ran a bipartisan lobbying campaign.** In both houses of the divided legislature, this NEA affiliate solicited bipartisan support.

"For quite a while, we've been cultivating pro-education people in both parties," says Dickerson. "We attend every Republican and Democratic event to which we're invited, and

THE BOTTOM LINE

HIGH-STAKES: More than half of America's parents—57 percent—believe that schools are neglecting subjects like the arts that can't be measured on standardized tests. For more: www.ascd.org/educationnews/pr/sylvan.html.

MORE TESTS, LESS CONFIDENCE: Over half the parents in states with high-stakes exams do not consider the mandated exams a true and valid measurement of their children's ability. For more: www.ascd.org/educationnews/pr/sylvan.html.

DROPOUT RATES: One of 10 kids age 16-19 is a high school dropout, the same percentage as a decade ago. Wisconsin has the nation's lowest teen dropout rate, Nevada the highest. For more: www.kidscount.org.

GRADING ADULTS: The nation's teenagers give America's adults a D+ for their efforts to stop young people from smoking, but a higher grade, B-, for providing kids a quality education. For more: www.uhlich.org/reportcard/Grades.htm.

we've made it clear that we will meet and work with people in both parties—even if they're anti-collective bargaining. KESPA is not a single-issue organization."

■ **KESPA grassroots lobbyists won the respect of legislators.** "Legislators responded to the down-to-earth approach of our folks and our message that classified employees are underpaid, overworked, and frequently treated unfairly," Dickerson stresses.

"Lawmakers were quite impressed by the statistics we were able to garner to back up our need for legislation," adds KESPA lobbyist Betty Watson. "Some legislators came on board when they realized that pressing ESP needs existed right in their own districts."

■ **KESPA knew how to turn on the heat.** Through a finely tuned communications network—including bill monitoring via the Internet, phone trees, and a daily hotline—KESPA members knew exactly when to apply pressure in Frankfort, the state capital.

Once alerted by staff monitoring the legislature, KESPA local affiliates in the Frankfort area dispatched volunteer lobbyists to committee hearings and even the Capitol cafeteria.

Locals in outlying regions, meanwhile, deluged legislators with phone calls and E-mail messages.

Even the 80 members of Daviess County KESPA made themselves heard.

"We called Frankfort every day and night and some drivers E-mailed with their computers," says local President Martha Hall. "We had the switchboard glowing!"

Better yet, Daviess County KESPA members "got non-members, friends, and relatives to inundate Frankfort with phone calls saying that we needed and deserved a 12-month retirement bill," Hall notes. "Many non-members who were active as lobbyists are now joining as full-fledged members!"

■ **KESPA knew the power of numbers.** Martha Hall contends that something besides a sense of justice prompted legislators to respond to the needs of ESP, who comprise 60 percent of Kentucky's school employees.

"When a politician talks to me, he sees five votes, and thinks 'Five votes for each phone call can make or break me,'" she points out.

"It's amazing," concludes KESPA's Betty Watson. "Now that politicians are recognizing the contributions of ESP, this attitude is filtering down to administrators. They're finally saying, 'Maybe we haven't been treating these people as they should be treated.'" ✔

"We work hard for what we get—so political involvement is where ESP need to be. We've *got* to have friends of public education in there."

—Kentucky ESP Association President Nancy Toombs

For more info on the Kentucky ESP Association, see www.kea.org/support Personnel/ or call 888/226-3500.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Many of the schools couldn't operate without classified employees. When you walk into the schools, the halls are shining and the walls are clean. These folks play an important role in the dignity of these children."

—Kentucky State Rep. John Arnold (D-Union County)

"Classified employees are not treated fairly, despite the value they add to children's education. Why don't we act to take care of them, to raise their salaries, and to treat them with the dignity they deserve?"

—Kentucky State Rep. Stan Cave (R-Fayette County)

YOUR DUES DID IT

■ **Thanks a Million:** NEA's Read Across America team thanks all members who made Read Across America a success this year—enlisting more than 25 million people in this reading celebration. To learn more about what's been happening, go to www.nea.org/readacross for "Read Across" photo highlights, a threaded discussion, and book lists.

■ **What a Bargain:** NEA and the National School Boards Association will co-sponsor the 14th annual Technology+Learning Conference in Denver on October 25-28. NEA will host special workshops during the meeting. NEA members can attend the conference for $235, a $260 savings. To register, use the NEA registration form at www.nea.org/technology/nsba/discounts.html.

KUDOS TO. . .

. . . The **Louisiana Association of Educators** led a broad coalition—including the Associated Grocers, Inc.—in "shutting down" a bill authorizing school boards to use state dollars to contract out food services. "We did so much damage," says LAE President Mary Washington, "that the Senate vote to table the bill was overwhelming!"

. . . The **Connecticut Education Association** and its partners in the statewide Citizens Alliance for Public Education have derailed Governor John Rowland's proposal for a $500 tuition tax credit, which would have funneled state support to private schools and high- income families. Rowland's tax plan died this year thanks to CAPE's lobbying and media campaign. But it'll be *back* in 2001.

. . . Through intensive lobbying, cooperation with other unions, and a mass rally, the NEA-affiliated **Hawaii State Teachers Association** and **University of Hawaii Professional Assembly** have helped defeat legislation that would have gutted public sector bargaining.

. . . Lobbying by the **Colorado Education Association** and its allies has killed a provision in the state's new "education reform" law to abolish due process for newly hired teachers. Elimination of teacher due process is a top priority of Governor Bill Owens. He has pledged to pursue this goal in the 2001 session.

SINGLE DADS: The number of fathers raising their children alone has tripled since 1980, with 3.1 million kids now living in homes without moms. For more: www.census.gov/Press-Release/cb98-228.html.

CHILD NUTRITION: Teenagers today are drinking twice as much carbonated soda as milk, and only 16 percent of school kids meet saturated fat guidelines, says the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more: www.usda.gov/news/releases/2000/06/0190.

EXTENDED HOURS: In Wichita, Stanley Elementary is now open from early morning to midnight, seven days a week. The school includes everything from a county library to a senior center. For more: www.usd259.com/elementary/stanley.html.

VOTING: Just a third of young people 18-24 voted in the last Presidential election, and only half of this age group is currently registered. Youth turnout dropped 10 percent between 1992 and 1996. For more: youth.hhs.gov/youthinf.htm#reports.

RIGHTS WATCH

Latest Supreme Court Rulings Raise Questions for Schools

Church-state and gay rights decisions will impact local districts.

In three closely watched cases decided last June, the Supreme Court struck down student-led prayer at high school football games, upheld the Boy Scouts' right to discriminate against gays, and okayed some forms of state aid to private and religious schools.

■ In the prayer case, several parents had challenged a policy of the Santa Fe school district in Texas that allowed elected student speakers to deliver "invocations" over the public address system before home football games.

In a 6-3 decision authored by Justice John Paul Stevens, the Court ruled that the policy runs afoul of the First Amendment. The pregame prayer, the Court said, is "prayer sponsored by the school" that will be perceived by students "as stamped with the school's seal of approval."

The prayer, the Court added, "has the improper effect of coercing those present to participate in an act of religious worship."

The majority opinion also stressed that students still are free to pray on their own "at any time before, during or after the school day." They just don't have the right to pray over the PA system at a school event.

In a strong dissent, Chief Justice Rehnquist complained that the majority opinion "bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life."

A week after the ruling in the Santa Fe case, the Court overturned an appeals court decision from Alabama that allowed student-led prayer at school assemblies, graduation, sporting events, and other school-related events. The High Court told the appeals court to reconsider its decision in light of the football prayer case.

■ In a 5-4 ruling in *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale,* the Supreme Court upheld the right of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to deny membership to gay youth and leaders.

Decorated Eagle Scout James Dale had challenged BSA's decision to oust him as scoutmaster of a New Jersey troop after learning that he was gay. The New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously ruled that BSA violated a state law banning discrimination in places of public accommodation.

The U.S. Supreme Court reversed, declaring that the state can't require the Scouts to accept Dale as a scoutmaster because that would violate BSA's First Amendment right "to oppose or disfavor homosexual conduct."

Dale's attorney, Evan Wolfson, called the Court's ruling a "Pyrrhic victory for the BSA leadership. They have won for themselves the dubious right to be bigoted and exclusionary."

According to David Buckel, an attorney with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Dale decision could have a significant impact on public school districts, which are one of the largest sponsors of Boy Scout troops.

Buckel warns that districts now may have to withdraw official sponsorship of Boy Scout troops because of their anti-gay policy. Because schools are public institutions, he argues, their official sponsorship of discriminatory organizations is "probably unconstitutional."

In response to the Dale decision, delegates to this summer's NEA Representative Assembly adopted a New Business Item calling on NEA to "urge state and local affiliates to work with school boards to establish policies requiring that all private organizations using school facilities have nondiscriminatory membership policies."

■ In the third case, *Mitchell v. Helms,* the Court ruled that public funds can be used to provide library and instructional materials—including computer software and hardware—to private and sectarian schools.

In a splintered 4-2-3 decision, a majority of the justices held that the federal program does not violate the First Amendment's requirement of church-state separation.

Voucher proponents claim that this decision signals the Court's willingness to uphold private school vouchers. Public school supporters, including U.S. Department of Education Secretary Richard Riley, disagree.

"The Court's decision today is not about vouchers. Under the [federal program] no funds go to any private school," notes Riley.

Both sides agree that, since the next President likely will appoint several new justices, the constitutionality of vouchers will be decided by the November election. ✔

— Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

On the Docket

Before the Supreme Court recessed for the summer, the Justices agreed to review two cases of interest to NEA members when the Court reconvenes on the first Monday in October.

■ In *University of Alabama v. Garrett,* the Court will decide whether public colleges and universities can be sued for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act. That's the federal law banning employment discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The High Court ruled last January that state workers—including employees of public colleges and universities—can't sue their employers for violating the federal law against age discrimination. That's because the 11th Amendment shields state entities from suit in federal court.

There's a real chance the Court will use the same reasoning to strip disabled state employees of federal protection from employment discrimination.

■ In *Bartnicki v. Vopper,* the Court will decide whether two NEA members can sue the president of an anti-union group and a radio station for disclosing the contents of their private telephone conversation, which had been illegally recorded.

In May of 1993, an unknown person tape-recorded a cell phone conversation between two teacher union officials from Wyoming, Pennsylvania, discussing stalled contract negotiations. During the conversation, the local president joked that they might have to "blow off" the "front porches" of school board members' homes to get their attention.

The head of the local anti-tax group obtained a copy of the recording and turned it over to a radio station, which broadcast the conversation. The union officials then sued both parties for civil damages as authorized by federal and state anti-wiretapping laws.

A federal appeals court threw out the lawsuit, ruling that the public's right to obtain information about newsworthy events outweighed the plaintiffs' right to privacy.

THE BOTTOM LINE

OBESITY: The federal government has released new growth charts designed to help parents and doctors identify kids at risk for being overweight. The number of overweight children has doubled since 1980. For more: www.cdc.gov/growthcharts.

WELFARE: Kids in welfare families miss more school than other students, but that's because they're in poorer health, not because of parental indifference. For more: www.abtassoc.com/newsroom/press-releases/pr-welfare-school.html.

THE WEB: The vast majority of parents with kids who use the Internet—94 percent—say their children spend the same or more time with family and friends since they started going online. For more: www.nsbf.org/safe-smart/isolate.htm.

TEST SCORES: Education reforms that reduce class sizes, expand pre-K, and increase available teaching resources lead to higher levels of student achievement, says a new RAND study. For more: www.rand.org/hot/Press/naepscores.htm.

INTERVIEW

Janell Byrd-Chichester

Segregation: Then and Now

School segregation is again on the rise, nearly 50 years after the Supreme Court ruled it illegal

Scott Suchman

In 1954, the Supreme Court declared in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* that laws separating the races in school are unconstitutional. This ruling paved the way for a significant reduction in racial isolation. But that isolation, today, is growing again.

The *Brown* case was brought by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. The Fund, now independent of the NAACP, continues to play a central role in desegregation. Janell Byrd-Chichester, the senior attorney in the LDF's Washington, D.C. office, spoke recently with *NEA Today's* Alain Jehlen.

Q: What was the impact of the *Brown* case on the learning of African-American children?

In certain parts of the country, the South in particular, African American students benefited tremendously. Before *Brown*, they had been segregated in schools that were underfunded and had fewer course offerings. You've heard the story about Black kids getting the old books after the white children. Those types of fundamental resource issues changed for lots of minority students when desegregation came about.

Desegregation, along with Title I and other Great Society programs adopted around the same time, helped narrow the academic achievement gap between Blacks and whites.

Minority students also benefited by being in integrated settings in a country where whites are dominant and control the jobs and access to higher education.

Networking opportunities brought real benefits to a population that had been completely isolated and excluded from business, community, political, and educational circles. Desegregation opened up these circles in some ways—not completely, of course, because we still struggle with that today.

Q: What about the effects on white children?

For whites, the research shows a couple of things. One, students who grow up in desegregated environments are more likely to feel comfortable in desegregated workplaces, to live in integrated neighborhoods, to have a diverse group of friends. All of that, I would expect, would redound to the benefit of everybody. One of the fundamental things that *Brown* recognized was the socializing effect of schools.

And two, we never saw any academic decline as a result of desegregation.

Q: Where are we headed now with desegregation?

For the most part, we did not begin to get real desegregation until the very late '60s, early 1970s.

Then, in the 1980s, the Reagan Administration began efforts to turn back the clock on those desegregation plans. Many cases have been closed out already, and many are in the pipeline. So we're facing a real serious threat of losing a lot of the desegregation that we had achieved.

For example, the Supreme Court allowed the Oklahoma City school board to abandon its desegregation plan, despite the fact that taking this step would recreate the same 99 percent Black schools that existed before desegregation.

The Supreme Court adopted a more relaxed standard, with a focus on return to local control. Now the test is, have local schools eliminated segregation to the extent practicable?

And often a judge will say, well, this is all that's practicable. It doesn't mean there's nothing left that can be done, but this is all the court is willing to press the school district to do.

Q: What can an individual educator do in school to help build a multi-racial society?

It's really important that the kids feel they are a part of the school, not that this is the white school, and I'm just kind of here, but not really part of this. It's critical that educators find ways to integrate minority kids in things like extracurricular activities and school leadership.

It's also important that the curriculum reflect the diversity of our nation, even in a racially isolated school. If you're in a school district that is 99 percent white, you still need African American history. You need Native American history.

Q: Did you have any personal experience with segregation and desegregation?

My older sister was one of the first African Americans to go to an integrated high school in Oklahoma City. She had the highest grades in the class, but they made a white guy the valedictorian, and they gave her an award in private, in the office. They could not handle having a Black valedictorian.

So that was our first and only experience with desegregation in Oklahoma City public schools and the rest of us all went to Catholic schools, in part because of the treatment she received but also because of my parents' close ties with the Catholic Church.

Oklahoma City was and is a very segregated place. And I would say that the racially polarized nature of the community is what drove me to focus on these issues. But for Oklahoma, I wouldn't be doing this.

Q: If the next one or two appointees to the Supreme Court are conservative, what might be the impact on desegregation?

Devastating. I fear for our ability to get to the magic five votes. Conservatives historically have not supported desegregation. So it would put desegregation at greater risk.

And it particularly would put the voluntary desegregation measures at risk, measures that many school districts support, like magnet schools. Another example: the City of Rochester and some of the suburban school districts have a voluntary inter-district transfer program. It's been very successful.

These voluntary measures have been challenged in court. There's a case pending in Rochester, and we've got challenges to magnet schools. Those programs would all be at risk. ✔

RESOURCES

- *Resegregation in American Schools*, Gary Orfield and John T. Yun, June, 1999. From the Harvard University Civil Rights Project. www.law.harvard.edu/groups/civilrights/publications/resegregation99.html.
- *Racial Issues and Identities: A Guide to Resources on the Web.* A *New York Times* follow-up to the series, *How Race Is Lived In America*, www.nytimes.com/library/national/race/web-guide.html.
- *Teaching Tolerance.* 64 pp. Semi-annual magazine of the Southern Poverty Law Center (free to teachers).
- *America's Civil Rights Movement.* Video/text kit for middle and upper grades, with teacher guide. One kit free per school from Southern Poverty Law Center. Fax: 334-264-7310.

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Networking to Improve Schools For Poor Kids

This educator is building foundations that link schools and community.

In 1974, 24-year-old **Wendy Puriefoy** was just out of graduate school and planning to teach colonial history in college. But Boston was struggling with court-ordered school desegregation, to improve the lives of thousands of low-income black children. Puriefoy took a job helping to monitor the desegregation process.

Today, she's still focused on better schools for poor kids, but now as director of the Public Education Network, which coordinates 51 Local Education Funds nationwide and serves 5.1 million children.

These nonprofit Funds bring together administrators, educator unions, business leaders, and other community people to improve education for disadvantaged children.

"The core learning relationship is between teacher and student," says Puriefoy. "What we do is build community support to strengthen that relationship."

And raise money—more than half a billion dollars since the first Ford Foundation grant in 1983. The biggest single project to date has been a $60 million library improvement project in 19 school districts.

Impact: The Portland (Oregon) Public Schools Foundation, a Local Education Fund, helped save 200 teacher jobs with a 30,000-person march and organized a successful referendum campaign to raise property taxes for schools.

For More: Visit the Web at www.publiceducation.org to find a Local Education Fund in your area or to get help in starting one.

Wendy Puriefoy

Sandy Schaeffer

Treating the After-Effects of Violence

Innovator:
Robert Pynoos

Job: Director, Trauma Psychiatry Program, University of California, Los Angeles

Bright Idea: Pynoos estimates that 3 percent to 7 percent of middle and high school students in high-crime areas have witnessed violent events traumatic enough to merit professional attention.

To help these children, his Trauma Psychiatry Program has developed guidelines that both clinicians and educators can use.

Pynoos believes schools in high-violence areas should screen students for post-traumatic stress. For children found to be seriously affected, he has devised a 16-week group treatment program.

In a study of children who witnessed a 1984 elementary school shooting in Los Angeles, Pynoos and his co-workers discovered that 10-year-olds had become as sensitive to startling noises as untraumatized five-year-olds. One child needed two years before his startle response returned to normal. Flashbacks, depression, and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress can last even longer.

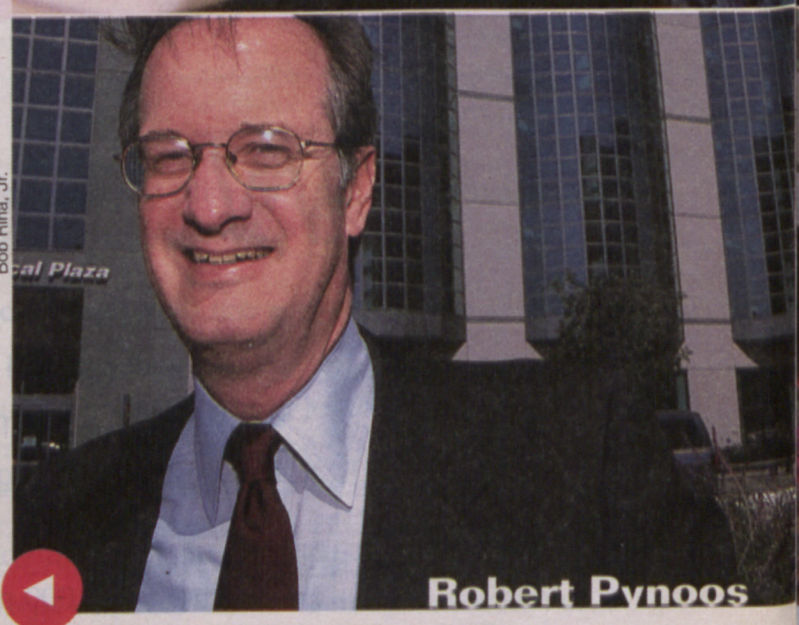
Pynoos has spent much of his career listening to children who have seen terrible things: mothers raped, classmates shot, neighborhoods destroyed by earthquakes.

"I've gained a lot of respect for the capacity and courage of these children," he says.

"Educators," adds Pynoos, "need to understand that these children will have a hard time concentrating and learning unless we help them get back on track.

Impact: The Trauma Psychiatry Program guidelines for screening and treatment have been used in schools across the United States and in other countries, including Bosnia. One group of 17 students who went through such a program had failed a total of 38 courses before they got help. After the program, their failure rate fell significantly.

For More: Check www.nea.org/neatoday for the program's new guidelines for educators working with traumatized children. Or contact UCLA Trauma Psychiatry Program, 300 Medical Plaza, Suite 2232, UCLA-NPI, Los Angeles, CA 90095.



Robert Pynoos

Bob Riha, Jr.

Ellen Banner

Joann Maynard Karen Anderson

Truancy KO'd in Washington

Innovators:
Joann Maynard
Karen Anderson

Job: Kindergarten teacher and library technician, respectively, Franklin Elementary School, Port Angeles, Washington

Bright Idea: Round One started for Joann Maynard with a complaint from one of her kindergartners: "Miss Maynard, I wanted to come to school, but my mother wouldn't listen to me." This student had missed 53 days.

Maynard, a 35-year teaching veteran, knew that the boy's mother wouldn't have to listen to her either, because the state truancy law didn't apply to children younger than eight.

So Maynard got together with other school staff to work to extend the law to younger children.

Karen Anderson, who's on the Washington Education Association board of directors, rallied WEA to the cause.

The group found a sponsor—a pro-education state representative who'd been supported by WEA—and launched their campaign.

"A good analogy," Maynard testified, "would be if I gave you a 180-page report to read, which is equivalent to our school year. Then, I tore out 53 pages at random. A lot of important concepts would be lost."

The lawmakers understood. Still, the group had to maneuver through opposition from home schoolers, who felt threatened.

Finally, the bill was signed into law. Home schoolers are not affected, but parents who enroll their children in school must make sure they go.

Impact: Attendance is up and tardiness is down.

For More: Contact Maynard and Anderson by Fax at 360/417-2066.

Rachelle Omenson

William Moskowitz

Dan Loftin

Seeing 20/20 Isn't Enough

Students who see "clearly" may still have vision problems that affect learning. "Behavioral optometry," which focuses on how children see, not what they see, can help, says **Dr. William Moskowitz,** *a leading behavioral optometrist from Bridgewater, New Jersey.*

Seeing clearly isn't good enough?

A student may have 20/20 vision but not be able to track along a series of words, or use both eyes together properly. These problems may be missed in routine eye tests.

How common are these problems?

Among first graders, they're very common—probably 20 percent or so. Some grow out of it in the next couple of years. But in fourth grade the print is smaller and more challenging. Children with problems are often discovered then.

What signs should educators look for?

The student may have no problems with phonetics or word recognition, but still read slowly. The student may have poor posture—that can be a result of poor eye motor development.

When reading, the student may skip words and lose his/her place. The student goes on and doesn't know what was missed, so comprehension plummets.

The most common symptom is these kids can't concentrate. They become frustrated, upset, they battle with their parents over homework. These students are often misdiagnosed as having attention deficit disorder.

What can help?

A child can do visual training exercises or use glasses that reduce the stress induced by reading. Some 750 board-certified behavioral optometrists around the country can help. Lists can be obtained from the state Optometric Societies or the College of Optometrists in Vision Development in St. Louis.

For More:
Visit www.visionhelp.com, www.vision3d.com or www.visionhelp.com/testing.htm.

Support Personnel Job Descriptions Made Clearer

Innovator: Tita Ferriol

Job: NEA staffer working with the NEA Job Description and Evaluation Task Force

Bright Idea: Ferriol has been developing a manual for education support personnel that focuses on results-oriented job descriptions, evaluation, and professional development.

"This manual will help members take the lead in fashioning job descriptions that highlight the importance of ESP in building quality public education," says Ferriol, a member of the NEA Teaching and Learning staff.

The publication, which goes to press this fall, offers solid guidance and a new approach to job description and evaluation for educational support personnel.

The manual, for example, focuses on creating results-oriented job descriptions—what a person accomplishes in the end instead of simply the checklist steps that are taken to achieve that goal.

With the information provided in the manual, NEA local affiliates can identify the results of each staffer's work, the duties needed to achieve the results, and how these results improve student achievement.

With the manual, ESP members can gain greater knowledge that will enable them to create a strong professional identity and improve communication with their supervisors.

And, at the same time, the manual offers communities a better idea of the value that ESP staff bring to the education environment.

For More: Check on the brochure, *Results-Oriented Job Descriptions for ESP*, available online at www.nea.org/esp/resource/rojobdes.htm. To order a free hard copy of the brochure or the manual, go to www.nea.org/esp/resource/esppubl.htm or write to ESP Program, NEA Affiliate Capacity Building, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

New Teachers Find a Friend

Kentucky educators can turn to a full-time professional development staffer—funded by the district, selected by the local Association.

The concept of teachers taking charge of their profession has hit some lofty new heights in Jefferson County, Kentucky. For starters, a teacher—Judy Brown, a 27-year veteran—now runs the district's New Teacher Mentoring Program.

What's more, the program was developed by the 4,800-member Jefferson County Teachers Association, working in conjunction with the Jefferson County Public Schools.

And last year, in filling the position that eventually went to Judy Brown, the district gave this NEA local affiliate a majority say in the hiring process. Brown now works out of the JCTA office.

The original idea for Jefferson County's mentoring program came out of brainstormings that involved local activists like JCTA Treasurer Sandy Hoover. The activists worked with UniServ Director Paula Cramer to create a mentoring program that could help newcomers grow—and stick with the profession.

The New Teacher Mentoring Program was the right idea at the right time. Jefferson County has more than 5,000 teachers, nearly 2,000 of whom have been hired within the past four years. In some district schools, the certified staff has almost completely turned over.

Sam Haverstick

New teacher Gwen Goffner (right) taps into an extensive mentor program run by veteran teacher Judy Brown.

Faced with the need to hire hundreds of new teachers for the 150-school Jefferson County district, the school superintendent had supporting new teachers high on his priority list.

So did the local school board, which has fully funded the JCTA-inspired New Teacher Mentoring Program.

In Kentucky, new teachers are assigned a resource teacher for one year through the state-mandated Kentucky Teacher Internship Program. But that's not enough support for new teachers.

"What's been really an eye-opener for us has been the number of teachers who resign during their second year," says Judy Brown. "Our focus now is teachers in the second through fourth year of teaching."

In the New Teacher Mentoring Program, veteran teachers facilitate small support and study groups, serve on workshop panels, and become one-on-one advisers via an online mentoring network arranged by grade level and content area.

The program offers monthly content-specific workshops on topics like understanding the school system, classroom management techniques, achievement test preparation, stress management, and financial planning.

Informal sessions and dinners add to these lessons and cover everything from where to go with questions on recertification to how to read a pay stub.

Bianca Mena Mogollon

How I Did It

June Karr
Preschool special needs teacher
Fairview, West Virginia

I love to cook and bake, so I started "Patti Cake Bakers" to encourage learning and raise self-esteem in my developmentally delayed preschool students at Watson Elementary.

We now start each unit by reading a children's book and end with a cooking activity related to the story.

We've made "chicken feed" (trail mix) for *Chicken Little* and baked chocolate chip cookies for *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.*

The process of cooking teaches the students several key lessons. They learn how to follow directions. They can see what happens when they mix things together and the importance of counting how much they put in.

This process is also a great way to get students excited about simpler tasks, such as describing the shape of a pancake or the colors in a salad. And, for them, the best part is having an edible finished product!

Before the final cooking project, we go through a series of other activities that tie each story to several subjects. We make cookies out of paper plates, and the students have to color each cookie and count out paper chocolate chips to put on them. We also cut turkey-shaped paper and glue on different colored feathers.

The students learn to work together and retell stories by using role playing, puppets, or story event cards.

Some children read the names on recipes, and others help count to

New teachers in the Jefferson County mentoring program pair with teachers who have at least five years' experience and, if possible, teach the same grade or content area. To help emergency credentialed teachers get up to speed, the program also targets recent retirees.

The mentoring program, Brown points out, is changing how veteran teachers perceive newcomers.

"It was an awakening," notes Brown, "for mentors to see there's such a diverse group coming into the profession—retired military, teachers from other districts, people from business, as well as fresh-out-of-college types."

"Our main focus is teachers in the second through fourth year of teaching."

—Judy Brown, New Teacher Mentoring Program

Brown is currently negotiating with the University of Louisville to offer professional development credit to mentors, and mentors can fulfill some state and local performance criteria by participating in the program.

In its first year, the Jefferson County mentoring program attracted 29 mentors and 38 new teachers, including a group under emergency certification.

"I work with union and non-union people to develop the program," says Brown. "My hope is that others will see the benefits of Association membership and get involved." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

For more:
E-mail Judy Brown at jbrown@jcta.org or visit www.jcta.org/mentoring.html.

make sure we have enough of everything.

At the end of the year, I give each student a recipe book of all our activities to use at home.

This type of teaching lends itself to hands-on activities that address many areas of development. It's not so much that it's different from other ways of teaching—it just does a great job of tying everything together.

Learning doesn't occur only by sitting down and making a child do a worksheet.

I hope to expand this project to include more parental involvement. My goal is to help parents realize that something they do every day—cooking—can become a learning activity.

If parents realize early on that learning can occur outside of a classroom, then their child will have a better chance at success.

[DILEMMA]

How do you make life easier for a new teacher?

When I mentored a fifth grade teacher, I helped her by continually anticipating anything that could catch her off guard during the day. I made a list of these potential pitfalls and gave it to her at the beginning of each day.

I also copied my file folder of tests, quizzes, and worksheets before she started each unit. She knew it was there to use as she needed, with no pressure.

Mike Buleza
Fourth grade teacher
Fawn Grove, Pennsylvania

■ When I was new, my mentor said to ask if I needed anything. But I was so overwhelmed that I didn't even know *what* to ask her. I think it's most beneficial to offer help to new teachers before they need to ask.

Ted Pitts

Before the first day of school, let them plan with you so they can see what you'll be doing. Talk to them about attendance, lunch, and other procedures.

Let new teachers know when things are coming up that they should be preparing for—report cards, conferences, principal evaluations. If the mentor teachers mention both curriculum items and management items as they begin to prepare for them, the new teachers will be able to prepare in a timely manner as well.

It's good practice to help new teachers, even if you aren't their assigned mentor. When we help the new additions to our profession, we become better as a whole team.

Laura Eliason
Fifth grade teacher
Woods Cross, Utah

■ When you make worksheets or plans for yourself, copy an extra set for the new teachers. They tell me this is great, especially when they get things from sources they might not have.

Samantha Garrity
Sixth grade teacher
Tracy, California

■ Tell new teachers about procedures, procedures, procedures! I can't stress that enough, especially being a new teacher myself. At the start of last year, I created a list of 40 classroom procedures that were important to the success of my class—sharpening pencils, coming in tardy, going to the restroom. The first two weeks consisted of modeling, practice, review, and testing these procedures. Little did I know the positive impact it would later have on students' school performance and self-esteem.

Genevieve Peters
Middle school teacher
Long Beach, California

■ We hold a special meeting (with food!) for new teachers during fall in-service. At this time, Association leaders and our UniServ representative welcome them, provide handouts and other useful items, and answer questions.

Marjorie Rios
High school Spanish teacher
Livingston, Tennessee

■ Last year, our fourth grade team decided to meet regularly to plan curriculum units. Our goal was to help our new teacher pace the content she needed to teach and organize the materials she would need. The extra benefit was that the two established teachers (one with eight years, the other with 30) also got well organized and only had to transfer lessons to daily lesson plans.

Susan Simons
Fourth grade teacher
Vernon, Connecticut

■ Never isolate a new teacher from other teachers. Set up a newsletter system where experienced teachers can share their ideas about methodologies and techniques that have made their classroom successful.

Invite a new teacher to lunch or dinner after work, and exchange phone numbers.

Debora Davis
Fifth grade teacher
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Got an Answer?

How do you build a greater sense of respect in students?

Send your answer by regular mail, by fax to 202/822-7206, or by E-mail to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org.

Please include your name, city, state, job title, and grade level, if applicable.

All published respondents will receive a new *NEA Today* mug.

What Makes a Quality School?

The staff and students of Maryland's Walkersville Middle School know, and they have the KEYS to make it happen.

Chris Hartlove

Walkersville "was not a happy place," says Kim Lewis. But the NEA KEYS program turned things around—and achievement is rising.

Four years ago, Walkersville Middle School in Maryland's Frederick County received low ratings—from its own staff. On a survey, educators indicated that they lacked a unified vision. They also didn't feel empowered. And ESP staff felt they were treated unequally.

Located in one of the fastest growing counties in Maryland, Walkersville was ranking lower than average on achievement tests, and many teachers were requesting transfers.

That survey, though, proved to be a turning point—the "KEYS" to the school's current success.

Walkersville eighth grade teacher JoAnne Wilson discovered the Keys to Excellence for Your Schools (KEYS) program at a summer leadership training retreat run by the Maryland State Teachers Association.

"The more questions I asked," Wilson recalls, "the more I realized that this sounded like the vehicle to get us going as a community of learners."

KEYS, an NEA program that helps analyze a school's organizational health, is based on a simple fact: Successful schools consistently display the same 35 characteristics.

These characteristics include everything from a shared commitment to basic goals to open communication and collaborative problem solving.

At Walkersville, communication was not the staff's strong suit. So Wilson and Kim Lewis, then the Frederick County NEA local affiliate president, went to work with principal Paul Dunford to introduce KEYS as a new common language. All five feeder schools into Walkersville were convinced to buy into the plan as well.

Staff, students, and parents all took the KEYS survey, which identifies 35 definable factors essential to developing and maintaining a quality education program in a school.

In the survey, participants rank 125 statements (one example: "My school has explicit goals for student learning."). The answers help indicate the level of quality present in the school.

The school improvement team used data from all the groups surveyed to identify those specific areas where staff, students, and parents needed to work together to create change over time.

That change has already started. Walkersville now has six master schedules, and teachers have full autonomy within these blocks. Staff work two shifts, and, by staggering teacher time, there's more planning time.

Teachers have also found a way to build in group study time before the Maryland statewide high-stakes assessment exam, an idea that came from eighth graders who took the survey.

The KEYS survey data also revealed that ESP staff weren't treated as equal partners in the school. Per diem pay for ESP on the school improvement team, for one, was less than for teachers.

Now ESP receive comp time according to a negotiated agreement, and two

Idea Exchange

Social Studies Hoops

My students really enjoy reviewing for a social studies test by playing this game.

Place a basket against the wall and stick pieces of tape on the floor, starting close to the basket and then going further back. Each piece has a point value—10, 20, 30, 40, 50, and 100.

Divide the class into two teams. Ask a member of one team a review question. If the student answers correctly, that person gets to shoot the ball. If the ball goes in, the scorekeeper records the points.

Alternate sides until all students have had a chance to answer a question. The side with the highest score wins, but I give both sides a reward.

Students love this game—not only are they reviewing for a test, they're having fun.

Gary Deurlein
Perry, Ohio

Flip Chart Trick

Turn any old notebook inside out, make a base out of cardboard, and attach it with duct tape. You have a flip chart!

I use mine to tell whose turn it is at the computer, who gets to sit on the couch, whose turn it is for show and tell. I also use flip charts to keep a running list of story starters for those who can't think of anything to write.

In catalogs, I discovered flip charts selling for $25 that were only notebooks turned inside out with a base on them. Teachers are too smart for that!

Janis Highley
Battle Ground, Washington

Tempera Paint Secret

Here's a secret I found useful when using tempera paint on anything other than paper.

When we make animals from waxy milk cartons, tempera paint often flakes off after they've been painted. Now I mix white glue in the paint so that about one-eighth of the mixture is glue. When the paint dries, it doesn't flake off.

This mixture also helps paint stick to glass bottles, jars, or plastic containers.

Vera Crisafulli
Glendive, Montana

Works 4 Me
nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? You can pass along your tips to *NEA Today*'s more than 2.4 million readers in one of five ways:

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- By E-mail: Ideas@neatoday.nea.org
- Through the Web: www.nea.org/neatoday

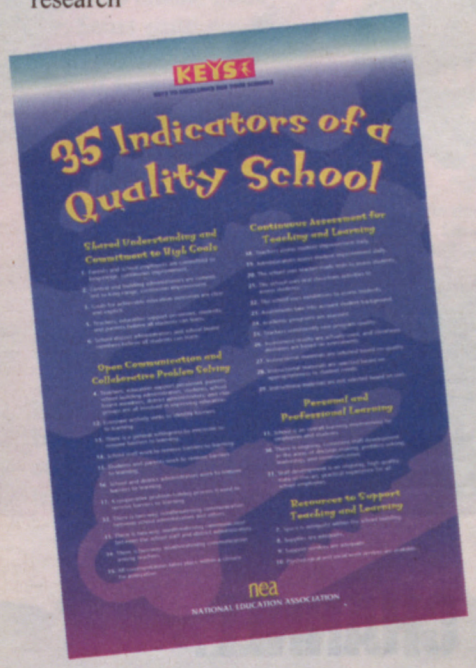
ESP members of the team have taken on leadership roles.

Student achievement at Walkersville has shown sustained progress. Each year, the number of students who pass the Maryland functional math, reading, and writing test has risen. Last year's scores saw the highest increase of any school in the county.

"We jumped up in every area," says Principal Dunford, "hitting scores near state standards in three areas and going over in one. We weren't predicted to do that until the year 2060."

Elsewhere in the nation, other low-performing schools are also using the NEA KEYS program to help spark significant increases in achievement.

The KEYS support package, available in English and Spanish, includes a start-up manual for schools, a resource and training guide, technical assistance, research


KEYS
35 Indicators of a Quality School
Shared Understanding and Commitment to High Goals
Continuous Assessment for Teaching and Learning
Open Communication and Collaborative Problem Solving
Personal and Professional Learning
Resources to Support Teaching and Learning
nea
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

KEYS "sounded like the vehicle to get us going as a community of learners."
—JoAnne Wilson, eighth grade teacher

updates, and case studies of how schools and Associations apply KEYS.

"KEYS gives you basic, common sense information on common sense issues," says Lewis. "Then, it's up to the school community to run with it. That's the key to KEYS." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

For more:
Contact your local Association; or visit www.nea.org/schools/keys.html.

[DILEMMA]

What do you do when you think a parent has done a student's assignment?

Interview the student. I always tell the student that I don't mind. In fact, I encourage parents to assist with the homework. I ask the student what was learned, how the research was done, what were some other results of trial-and-error experiments. I also ask what their parents learned, because they often do learn and express that to their children.

I usually ask the students to assess the work and give themselves a grade. They are surprisingly honest, and sometimes they are too hard on themselves.

It takes more time to do it this way, but a lot of students don't have the self-confidence to start or complete some assignments on their own.

I have also found that some students let parents "do" the assignment just to have the opportunity to spend more time with them. This is sad.

Phyllis Wright
Ninth grade health teacher
Front Royal, Virginia

■ Last year was my first year teaching, and I was shocked each time a child brought in homework that was completed by the parents. When this happened, I asked the children whether they did their homework by themselves or with help. Every time, the child admitted that mom or dad did the homework.

I explained to them that there is no reason for their parents to do their work. I had the child redo the homework in school, to ensure that they understood the skills and to reinforce that there are consequences for bad choices.

Kelly Curtin
First grade teacher
Jersey City, New Jersey

■ Parents feel that they need to help their child, but they don't realize the mixed messages that the child is given.

When I can prove that the parent has done the work, I give the work back to the parent with a grade and a message. The grade is what the parent earned, and the message is that I still expect the child to turn in the work.

I ask for a conference, at which I let the parent go first. The main reasons they offer usually are: The child was busy with other activities, they didn't want the child to fall behind, or the child didn't understand the work.

I try to explain to parents that while I understand the importance of extracurricular activities, the message to the child is clear: School work is not important, unlike ballet, gymnastics, or basketball.

And I ask the parent, "How long will you be doing the work—until high school?" Most parents then realize what they've started, which is a crutch for their child.

Andrea Heitzman
Elementary teacher
Beaufort, South Carolina

■ When I read assignments that appear to have been written by someone other than the student, I make no marks on the paper other than a comment at the end: "How does it happen that this paper is so much better than any you have written in class?" Or, in the case of a routine assignment prepared outside the classroom: "Why isn't your classwork of this caliber?"

As for grading the assignment, I put a symbol in my grade book indicating it was invalid. When I average the grades, I simply omit it.

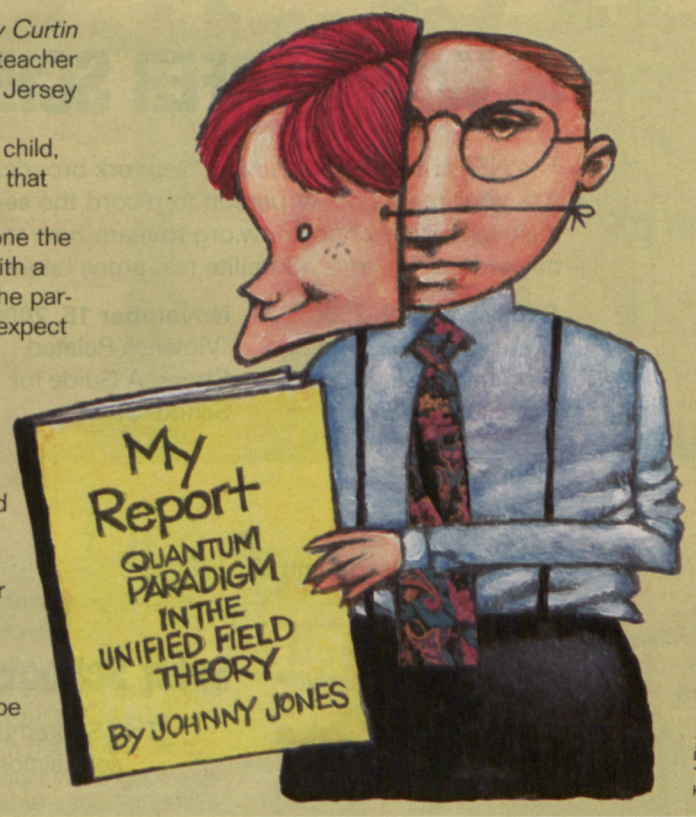
Mary Alice Dick
Retired English teacher
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Got an Answer?

What's the best way to bring a transfer student up to speed?

Send your answer by regular mail, by fax to 202/822-7206, or by E-mail to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Please include your name, city, state, job title, and grade level, if applicable.

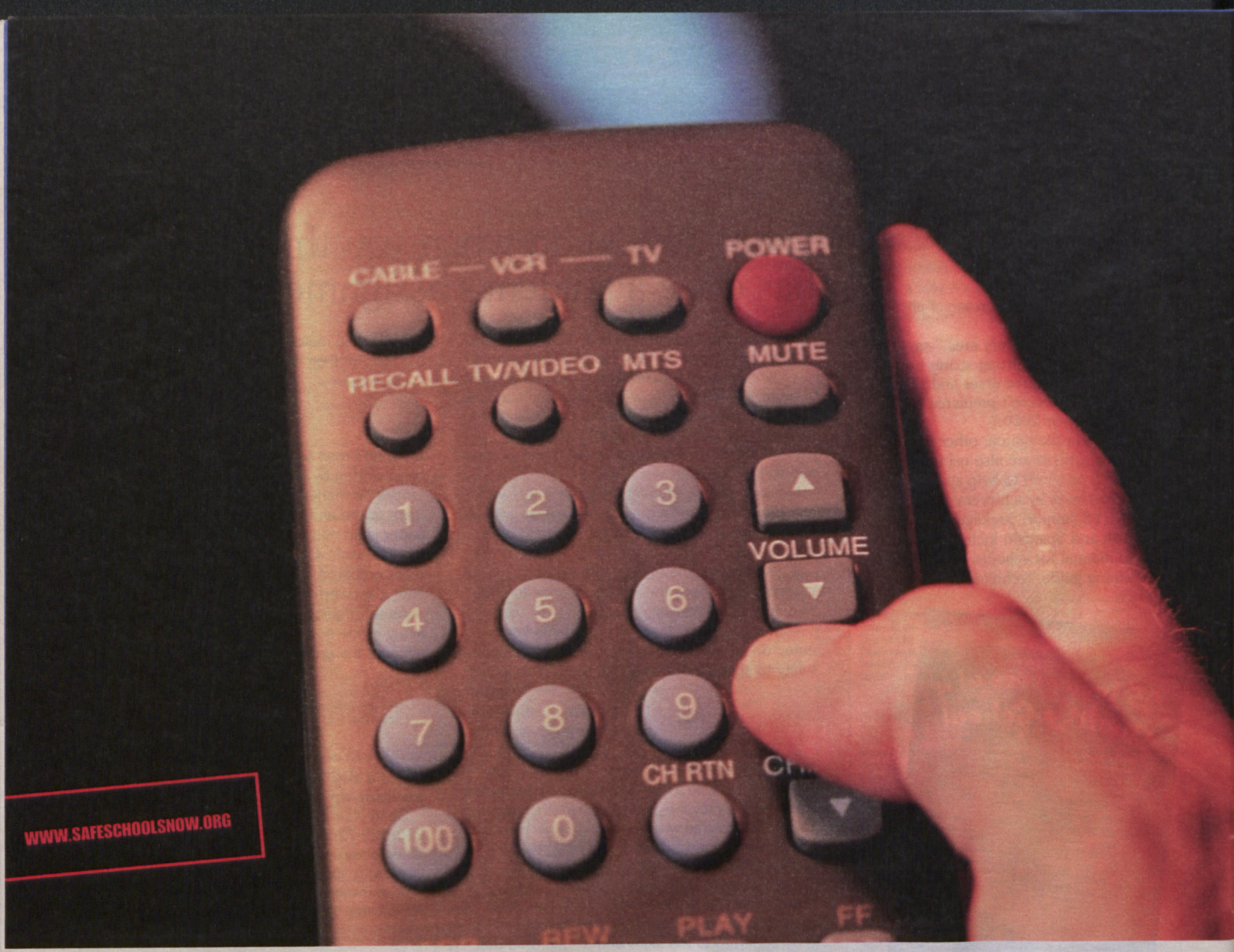
All published respondents will receive a new *NEA Today* mug!



Ted Pitts

Real Teachers . . . watch *Star Wars: Episode One* and jot down trivia for bonus questions or anticipatory sets at the beginning of class.

—Ellen Levy, middle school teacher, Buffalo Grove, Illinois



WWW.SAFESCHOOLSNOW.ORG

WANT SAFER SCHOOLS? CHANGE THE CHANNEL.

The NEA's Safe Schools Now Network broadcasts are being used in schools across the country to improve school safety. Ask your media or AV person to record the series off the satellite and share the broadcasts with your school community. Visit www.safeschoolsnow.org to learn how to access broadcasts and satellite coordinates, download resource guides, or buy videos "at cost." Satellite test times begin at 1:45 pm ET. Broadcasts air from 2:00-2:45 pm ET on dates listed below.

September 28, 2000
"Safer Schools: Helping Students Resist Drugs"
1:30-2:00 pm ET
(extended test time)
2:00-2:45 pm ET
(program)
*2:45-3:15 pm ET
(viewer call-in segment)

November 16, 2000
"Violence-Related Stress: A Guide for School Staff"

February 1, 2001
"Addressing Bias and Hate in the School Setting"

March 22, 2001
"Building Skills to Manage Student Anger"

May 24, 2001
"Media Violence: Teaching Students Critical Viewing Skills."

Safer Schools: Helping Students Resist Drugs*

This September 28th Back-to-School Special examines the connection between substance abuse and violence.

Broadcast produced in collaboration with the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.

Additional support provided by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, National Guard Bureau, Florida National Guard, and the Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training Center.

*** A live *Viewer Call-In* segment has been added to this broadcast.**

'Oh, The Places You'll Go!'

That's the theme for the 2001 Read Across America campaign, the NEA project that's stirring up year-round interest in reading.

More than 23 million children and adults celebrated the joy of reading and Dr. Seuss's birthday last March 2 as part of NEA's 2000 Read Across America celebration.

Now NEA members nationwide are gearing up for 2001. The theme: *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*

In this classic book, Dr. Seuss urges readers to fly high to reach goals, even if they're facing the dreaded "Hakken-Kraks."

"Besides its wonderful, positive message, *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* offers an apt analogy for books themselves," says NEA staffer Barby Halstead-Worrell. "The places we can go through books are endless and exciting."

Oh, The Places You'll Go! also offers NEA members a wonderful theme to build upon for Read Across America celebrations next March 2. Using the travel theme, send students packing on virtual trips. Challenge your students to go the distance by reading a set number of books or pages.

The Cat in the Hat & Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. 1957, 1997 All Rights Reserved.

This past March, educators came up with a wide array of projects that got kids diving into books. For example, creative NEA members urged students to read enough pages to cover the distance across their state, or even the country. Some students read books about real towns with intriguing names or from regions totally unlike their own.

Other popular projects last year involved having guest readers in the classroom. Some schools held Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) drills or had students dress up as favorite Dr. Seuss characters. And always popular are activities that have kids eating "green eggs and ham."

Students nationwide especially enjoyed meeting a reading challenge.

Typically, school staff would challenge kids to read some unprecedented number of books. The students' reward? School staff would do something wacky, everything from dying their hair purple to diving into root beer floats, frozen lakes, bathtubs of gelatin, or big vats of pudding.

Educators are tapping into the enthusiasm generated by Read Across America events like these to promote reading as a year-round activity, both at school and at home.

At the Read Across America Web site, you'll find lots more stories about how NEA members are motivating students to read. You'll also find plenty of inspiration that can help you create your own celebration for March 2.

As Dr. Seuss puts it:

And will you succeed?
Yes! You will, indeed!
(98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)

The Read Across America site also links to Reading Matters, NEA's new Web area that offers research, classroom activities, and lots more for educators helping kids learn to read. ✔

For more: Visit the Web at www.nea.org/readacross.

The Cat in the Hat's chapeau has become a widely popular symbol for enthusiastic readers nationwide, thanks to NEA's Read Across America.

HOW TO... LINE UP AUTHOR VISITS

Inviting "real-live authors" to visit your school or classroom can add an exciting chapter to a young reader's life. With enough advance notice, most authors are willing to tailor their presentations to meet your needs.

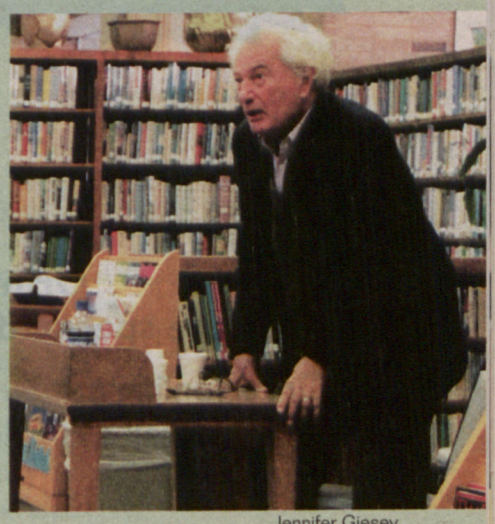
Here's how to make an author visit a rousing success.

- Plan to book authors several months in advance, especially for busy times such as National Children's Book Week in November, National Poetry Month in April, and Black History Month in February.

For info on lining up a specific author, check www.childrensbookguild.org/SpeakersBureau.html. Contact Children's Book Council authors and illustrators through www.cbcbooks.org/navigation/teaindex.htm.

- Specify all details in writing so there are no unpleasant surprises for either party. Cover transportation, accommodations, fees, ages and sizes of groups, length and number of presentations, and note which books will be featured. Involve the publisher or author's agent, and set clear expectations for autographing and book sales.
- Engage students, staff, and parents. Read the author's work. Post a photo and bio. Assign a related project before the visit. Prepare students for a Q&A session. Ensure the school and local library have the author's books.
- Make sure staff are present and actively involved at all times. Don't expect your guest to monitor classroom behavior.

—Michelle Y. Green, NEA Today *(author of the* Willie Pearl *historical fiction series)*

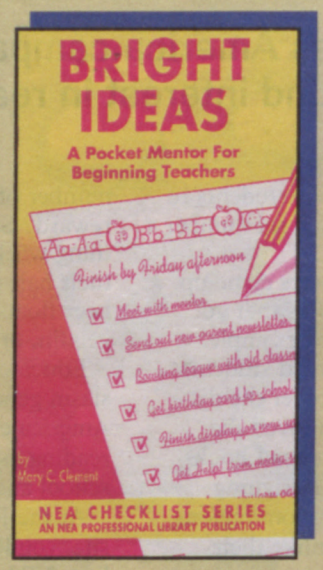


Jennifer Giesey

Back-to-School Gift Pack

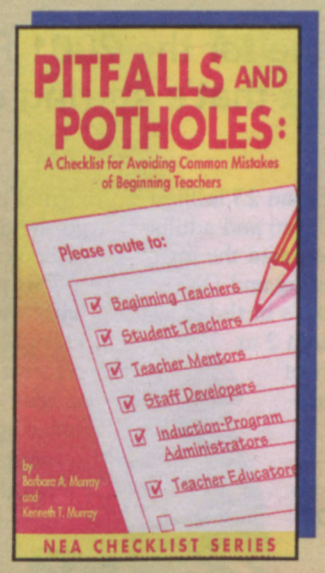
Countdown to the First Day of School

A comprehensive get-ready checklist that can help any teacher prepare for the new school year.
56 pp., Item #2150-9-00-D



Bright Ideas
A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers

Tips and techniques to help you prepare, personally and professionally, for your first teaching job.
56 pp., Item #2153-3-00-D



Pitfalls and Potholes
A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers

A guide to avoiding the most common mistakes new teachers say they wish they'd been warned about in college.
56 pp., Item #2151-7-00-D

This fall, don't just welcome your new colleagues. Give them a head start on success!

A $13.50 value for just $9.00!

All that head start takes is the NEA Professional Library *Beginner's Survival Pack*, a set of three handy guides that can help all newcomers to your school's faculty — beginning, transfer, and student teachers — make a smooth transition and succeed with students.

The three guides — all from the popular NEA Professional Library *Checklist* series — are designed for busy teachers. Short, practical, and reader-friendly, they're chock full of valuable tips and specially designed for quick reading. Beginning teachers will find the *Beginner's Survival Pack* a great addition to their classrooms — and careers.

Now, for a limited time only, you can get the *Beginner's Survival Pack* at a special NEA member price. You can get this three-pack for just $9! That's only $3 per book — $1.50 below the regular NEA member $4.50 price.

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The Wealth Factor

A sociologist says racial differences in family assets, not culture, explain achievement gaps in school performance.

Over recent years, magazines and newspapers have run a variety of articles that explore why middle-class Black children don't do as well in school as white children from families with similar socio-economic backgrounds. These "achievement gap" articles are based on studies that relate achievement to family incomes. But the findings from these studies, argues one researcher, are highly misleading—because they simply fail to factor in what may be the key determinant to socio-economic status: family wealth.

If Black and white students enjoy the same family income, doesn't that mean they have the same socio-economic status?

No, says Dalton Conley, a sociologist at New York University who formerly taught at Yale. In his 1999 book, *Being Black, Living In the Red* (University of California), Conley draws a distinction between income—the money parents earn—and wealth.

A family's wealth includes everything the family owns: a home, other property, stocks, savings, and the like. Wealth provides deeper economic security than income. Young adults from families with assets, for instance, can borrow from their parents for a down payment on a house.

Parents with wealth have a cushion against hard times. Consider the hypothetical case of two families whose chief breadwinners are laid off from identical jobs. The family with assets can weather the storm and pay the mortgage, continuing to build equity.

The family without assets, meanwhile, is devastated. Unable to meet the mortgage, the family might end up in an apartment in a much poorer neighborhood, with poorer schools.

Ruth Sofair Ketler

So how does wealth affect student achievement?

Parents who own their home or other forms of wealth are imbued with a sense that "their kind" of people can make it in America. They have a stake in society.

An everyday example: Streets populated by homeowners are better taken care of than streets populated by renters, even if incomes are the same.

Families with assets also know they have resources to tap to buy crucial advantages for their children—like a college education.

Children soak up this feeling at the dinner table and in a thousand other little interactions that have more impact than any amount of preaching.

"Wealth is both the pot at the end of the rainbow and the means for getting there," as Conley puts it.

Do current wealth holdings vary significantly by race?

In 1998, the latest year with decent data, the median net worth for minority families was $16,400—less than one-fifth the median net worth for white families.

Black people in America tend to have a lot less wealth than white people, even when their incomes are equal.

Among families with incomes between $35,000 and $50,000 a year, the median wealth for whites is $81,000, Conley notes. For Blacks, the figure is $40,000.

Why the big difference? One big factor is the historic discrimination Black families have faced. The "redlining" of Black neighborhoods by banks, for instance, has made it almost impossible for many Black families to secure credit for starting businesses or buying homes.

Discriminatory policies like redlining help explain why Black families actually save slightly more of their incomes than whites, yet they own less.

The bottom line: When Black and white children come from families with similar incomes, they may seem to be at the same socio-economic level, but they're not—because their family wealth levels are usually so different.

When wealth and other factors are equal, do Black students do as well as white students?

Generally, yes. Conley, mining data from a large, ongoing study of American families, says that when you take wealth into account, white and Black children are more alike than different. The much-vaunted "achievement gap" largely disappears when you take family wealth into account.

Add to wealth the level of parental education and you have the factors that can predict much of school success.

For example, Black students are much more likely to be expelled from school than white students. But that difference evaporates if you look at students from families with similar wealth and parental education.

Black students are also much less likely to graduate from college than white students, but, again, the driving forces seem to be family wealth and parental education, not race.

In fact, when family wealth levels are similar, Black students are *more* likely to graduate than whites.

What about reports that attribute achievement gaps to Black student peer pressure against 'acting white'?

"What kids tell you about their motivations is the last, window-dressing link in a long causal chain," says Conley. "I worry little about attitudes that kids espouse to reporters.

"All kids are anti-intellectual," Conley adds. "Nobody wants to be the class nerd. But motivation and achievement would be different if the fruits of the American Dream were equally accessible."

—Alain Jehlen

For more:

- Dalton Conley's book, *Being Black, Living in the Red*, can be ordered through *NEA Today* Online at www.nea.org/neatoday/0009/scoop.html.
- For a high school curriculum that explores issues around economic inequality, check *Teaching Economics As If People Mattered*, by Virginia teacher Tamara Sober Giecek. Contact United for a Fair Economy, 37 Temple Pl., Second Floor, Boston, MA 02111. Fax: 617/423-0191. E-mail: info@ ufenet.org.

Learning

TEAMWORK

Alabama Support Staff Create Bus Safety Program

A giant turtle helps spread the word about bus safety in Dothan, Alabama

Jay Hare

School bus safety is a top priority for, from left, Peggy Black, "Safety Sam" Jessie Jinks, and Jeanene Stremski.

Six years ago, Alabama bus driver Jeanene Stremski returned from NEA's annual ESP conference with an inspiration. She had seen a presentation about a bus safety program in Florida's Escambia County and was determined to create a similar program in her own 10,000-student Dothan City district.

Stremski enlisted the aid of kindergarten teacher Rachel Burchfield, ESP colleagues, and local administrators. They all worked through the summer developing a curriculum and creating materials and, that fall, the Dothan City Educational Support Personnel Organization (ESPO) "Safety Sam" program made its debut.

"Safety Sam" has since become one of the main ways the 375-member Dothan City ESPO works with students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Each year, every kindergarten teacher in Dothan shows students some short bus safety videos. Then Stremski and her fellow trainers—bus drivers Peggy Black, Jessie Jinks, and Marjorie Chancey, and former driver Ann Phillips—brings in Safety Sam to meet the kindergarten youngsters. Safety Sam always appears in a big, green turtle suit.

"We want the kids to feel like the school bus is a safe place," says Stremski.

After talking with children in the classroom, Stremski and co-workers take them to a bus to show them how to get on and off safely. The bus drivers also explain how the driver's two-way radio works and how to make an emergency exit. They also send home safety information for parents.

The program works. Bus drivers report fewer discipline problems than before—and note that Safety Sam's impact lasts far beyond kindergarten.

"I hear fifth and sixth graders still talking about Safety Sam," notes Stremski, who says the kids also like Klutzball, a character in the program who doesn't follow the safety rules.

Stremski, a 19-year veteran driver who serves on the Alabama Education Association's ESP board of directors, is quick to share credit for the Safety Sam program's success with her fellow ESP, teachers, administrators, and supportive community residents.

Safety Sam has become a real fixture throughout Dothan. The program's turtle mascot appears at malls, grocery stores, and other community sites. And each November, as more than 100,000 spectators watch, bus drivers, kindergartners, and teachers ride on Dothan City ESPO's Safety Sam float in the National Peanut Festival parade.

Last fall ESPO received an ESP Technology Grant from NEA (see box) to buy a computer for designing and publishing Safety Sam materials and tracking student participation.

Dothan City ESPO also hopes to create its own Web site soon. ✔

NEA's ESP Tech Grants

NEA's ESP Technology Grants are designed to help local affiliates use online resources to become more effective and to help restore public confidence in public education. Applications for the next cycle of grants will be due in the spring, with grants ranging from $250 to $3,500 per local.

For application guidelines and information about current and past grant winners, visit the NEA ESP Web site at www.nea.org/esp/espnea/techgrnt.htm.

You can also E-mail ESP.Program@nea.org or phone the NEA ESP Program at (202) 822-7131.

Going the Extra Mile

Food has become a vital part of education, "because a lot of kids don't get what they need at home," says Rosemarie Wood, head cook at Sedgwick (Maine) Elementary.

"Sometimes the kids just don't want to eat when the bus comes early in the morning," she adds. "But by the time they get to school, they're usually hungry."

To make meals fun and educational, Wood plans several theme lunches each year. These include "author's day," when lunch relates to a story all the students know.

Special lunches are also provided on Thanksgiving and Halloween and days when military veterans are invited to dine and share stories with students.

Wood's favorite theme was

TEAM PLAYER

Out From Under the Thumb

Name: Helen Loop
Job Title: Head cook and custodian at LeRoy Elementary in Michigan's Pine River School District
What I do: From 7 a.m., when we start making breakfast, to 1:30 p.m., when we finish serving lunch, I'm in the cafeteria. Then I put on my other hat as school custodian, from 2 to 4.

I'm also the president of the Pine River ESP Association and co-chair for our regional Coordinating Council, so I have plenty of meetings and conferences to keep me busy.
Crowning Achievement: A few years ago, the school board decided the Food Services Division was doing so badly that it hired Canteen/Chartwell to manage the division.

Canteen/Chartwell promised not to change much, but then it did. The company changed our hours, cut portions, and made us feel like there was always someone waiting for us to mess up.

Our union took the case to the board, and we fought for one and a half years to get back the right to run our division. With the help of teachers and parents, we're now allowed to serve kids healthy, home-style meals in decent portions and in a friendly environment. Canteen/Chartwell drove the kids to go out for junk food instead of eating what was served in the cafeteria. Now the kids love eating at school. Even teachers eat at school. Plus, we don't have to pay a consultant $55,000 a year.
Future plans: We're focusing on offering more nourishing foods after school, like sandwiches, fruit, and yogurt. It's always an adventure trying to get something from the school board, but we're trying.
Inspiration: I used to sit back and gripe all the time. Finally, my husband told me that if I wanted anything done, I'd have to get up and do it myself.

So I started going to union meetings, became president, and then started this effort to get back the schools' food service. And we did it!

When the cooks walk into the kitchen, people immediately see the difference. They say, "You're so much more fun now!" We feel pride, and it's wonderful. ✔

Helen Loop (left) receives the outstanding Person in Education Award for her work in improving the Food Services Division in Michigan's Pine River School District.

NEA

RESOURCES

A new approach to job descriptions

If you work in an educational support personnel position but have no job description—or have a job description that has very little in common with your actual job—you're not alone. This situation is all too common for NEA's support staff members.

But help is here. A new NEA pamphlet, *Results-Oriented Job Descriptions for Educational Support Personnel*, outlines an approach to providing clear expectations for employees and supervisors.

You can read this publication online at www.nea.org/esp/resource/rojobdes.htm. Free print copies can be obtained by contacting the NEA ESP Program, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, Tel: 202/822-7131, E-mail: ESP.Program@nea.org.

Bus privatization costs more in Ohio

In Ohio, school districts that contract out transportation have paid significantly more on average, whether measured per pupil or per mile, than school districts that have handled pupil transportation in-house.

That's one of the key findings of *Taking Them for a Ride: An Assessment of the Privatization of School Transportation in Ohio's Public School Districts*, a study by Mark Cassell of the Kent State University Department of Political Science.

Cassell analyzed official reports filed by 611 school districts from 1994-1998. The study is available at www.afscme.org/wrkplace/takerdtc.htm.

Team up for school lunch

This October 9-13 is National School Lunch Week. This year the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) and the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service are partnering to promote the week with a football theme, "Team Up to Promote School Lunch."

ASFSA has assembled a variety of resources on the Web to celebrate School Lunch Week, including menus, recipes, and downloadable graphics for use in flyers. Also available: the *Team Up for School Lunch Playbook*, a free 21-page public relations toolkit that you can download and print out.

You can find all this information at www.asfsa.org/nslw2000/.

"Indian day." She researched and created a meal of Native American food for students.

"The kids are the most important part of my job," says Wood. "I just try to focus on them and interact with what's going on in their classrooms."

For her inventiveness and attention to students' needs, Wood was presented with the 2000 Joan McGovern Educational Support Personnel Award, given each year by the Maine Education Association.

School spirit and academic achievement are of equal importance in the eyes of **Sharon Moser,** Iowa's 2000 ISEA Educational Support Personnel Award winner.

A former special ed associate, Moser now works at Fort Dodge's Cooper Elementary library. Her goal: to encourage a love of reading in students and make sure that lunchtime is a fun and positive time for everyone.

An active member of the Fort Dodge Education Association's teacher associate bargaining unit, Moser is also involved with the Juvenile Diabetes Association, serves as a community outreach resource person, and volunteers for the Fort Dodge Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Board.

Investor Dilemma: Try the New Or Stick With Tried and True

Q: I'm a beginning investor. Should I be investing in the old economy or the new economy?

A: Excellent question. These terms have come into vogue this year as investors try to explain the split in the performance of different sectors of the economy. The Dow Jones Average of 30 Industrial Stocks is often considered an investment in the old economy, with its stocks like Coca-Cola, General Motors, Procter & Gamble. The Nasdaq 100 Trust, which invests in the 100 largest stocks on the over-the-counter market like Microsoft, Intel, Cisco, Sun Microsystems, is a technology-heavy investment in the new economy of computers, cell phones, and E-mail.

All investors must make their own decisions on what are the right investments for them. But I think most investors should include both old and new economy stocks. I often tell newbies to consider a very broad stock market index fund like the Vanguard Total Stock Market, which represents the entire market of all stocks that are traded, both old and new economy.

Q: All my daughter wants to do is shop. How can I teach her that money doesn't grow on trees?

A: I have a teenage daughter, too, and I decided last spring to teach her some lessons about money. What I'd really like to teach Krista is how to pick a stock or a mutual fund. But she'd be asleep in three minutes. So I decided a lesson on shopping was more likely to hit home.

What we need to teach our kids is how to incorporate values into money decisions: how to share and how to save, how to work hard, and how to enjoy what they buy. But you must tailor your lessons to your kids.

I decided to give Krista a budget for her spring wardrobe. I told her she needed to get out all her clothes from last year, make a list of what she could wear and a second list of what she needed, and estimate how much each item might cost.

Next, she'd have to make a presentation to my husband and me, arguing for the money she'd need. It turned out that she couldn't wear anything from last year, when she was a size 9. She'd shot up about four inches and now wore a size 6.

She figured she'd need two pairs of shoes, six shorts, two pants, six shirts, one dress, one skirt, one sweater, two swimsuits, and underwear. She made reasonable estimates of what these items might cost at The Gap or Express, where she shops, added it up, and was then too timid to mouth the words. Six hundred bucks. She couldn't believe it.

When I took her shopping, she walked straight out of the first store, Urban Outfitters, because it was out of her price range. She bought four items that day, refused to go over what she'd allotted for each, saved the receipts, and vowed to wait for the Gap Capri pants to go on sale.

When she went to the mall with a friend, she said: "I'm not going to use any of my budget money because I might want to get silly stuff. I'll use my babysitting money for that." By early summer, she'd spent $300 of her budget.

There's a money lesson that's right for every child. My 10-year-old son wouldn't give a hoot about shopping money, but he might want to know about the stock market.

Q: What is an exchange-traded fund (ETF)?

A: The simplest answer is that this is a fund that trades on a stock exchange. A mutual fund, of course, is a pool of securities, sliced into pieces and sold to investors.

Traditional funds are bought and sold by the fund companies.

Exchange traded funds trade on the stock exchange and you buy them as if they were shares of stock. They are priced throughout the day. ETFs have been getting a lot of attention because lots of new ones are being introduced.

For example, you can invest in an exchange-traded fund that invests in the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index, or in many different Dow Jones indexes like technology or Internet or financial stocks as well as the largest stocks on the Nasdaq exchange.

The ETFs are typically cheaper than traditional funds. The average traditional stock mutual fund costs 1-1/2 percent a year in expenses. In May, Barclay's Global Investors introduced an index fund to invest in the S&P 500 stock index that costs less than 1/10th of one percent.

The American Stock Exchange, which is where the ETFs trade, has information at its Web site at www.amex.com.

Barclay's, which introduced 15 new funds at the end of May with another 25 on the way, also set up a Web site at www.ishares.com.

—Mary Rowland

Rowland is an author and contributor to financial planning magazines.

Thrifty Educator

This month's tips come from Marilyn LaPorte, mklaporte@hotmail.com, a computer literacy and earth science teacher at Merrill Middle School in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and from Valerie L. Townsend, vtownsend@imail.valpo.k12.in.us, a fifth grade teacher at Flint Lake Elementary School in Valparaiso, Indiana:

LaPorte: "Instead of purchasing expensive racks to hold students' papers while they type, I use the wire book stands that are sold for school libraries. They can hold paper fine and are about one-third of the cost."

Townsend: "I provide a two-disk case for each student to store disks in for the year. This prevents some of those dirty fingers getting all over the disk and causing problems. One disk is kept for word processing and the other for projects that require a lot of memory like Hyperstudio stacks. I number the disks and assign each student a number. That way the disks can be used year after year with minimal replacements. All my disk cases are placed in a basket in the room for easy access."

Have a favorite money-saving tip that you apply in your workplace? How about sharing your idea with colleagues? Just send your tip along to neatoday@nea.org.

Over 95 percent of NEA members rate NEA Member Benefits excellent for service.

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

Members planning to travel this year have a new resource for car rental: Alamo. The NEA Car Rental Program introduced Alamo Rent A Car, LLC, as an additional provider for NEA members earlier this year.

NEA members 21 years and older can rent a vehicle, with up to 25 percent off retail daily and weekly rates at all Alamo U.S. domestic locations for economy through full-size vehicles. No other association enjoys up to 25 percent off.

A daily surcharge applies for persons age 21-24.

The NEA program will be honored at over 100 Alamo locations in the United States. You can make reservations online at neamb.com.

When booking online, the NEA ID number is 613575. The rate code, "BY," will be automatically filled in in the appropriate areas.

Good news for NEA members seeking National Board Certification!

NEA Member Benefits will be extending the low-interest rate loan to members seeking National Certification for the 2000-2001 season. These loans continue to be available through MBNA America Bank, N.A.

The loans cover the $2,300 assessment fee for National Board Certification and feature an APR of 7.9 percent, no annual fee, a 90-day deferred payment option (payments continue to accrue), and no prepayment penalty.

Members can take up to 3 years to repay.

To qualify for this special rate, you must be an NEA member and you must use these funds for the cost of National Board Certification. For more information, call 1/800-603-3953.

A Web Site for Reflection

Students get a great Web view of the Palace of Versailles where the peace treaty ending World War I was signed.

Virtual Visits in History

This site offers a panoramic virtual visit to the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles where world leaders met to sign the Peace Treaty ending WWI. It's a stunning view for history students, and I've used it to jump-start discussions about this era.

www.chateauversailles.fr/exec/360.asp?PIC=glace.vtl&REQ=default.htm&LANG=EN)

Jo Burr
American history, English teacher
Lawrence, Kansas
Jburr@USD497.org

Chemistry Made...Easier

I've found a great free resource for teaching the periodic table of elements and chemistry. This table has to be one of the most comprehensive available on the Internet.

The table provides information on all 109 officially named elements, including over 30 properties, 3,600 nuclides (isotopes), 4,400 nuclide decay modes, the elements' names in eight languages, and more. Technical terms are linked to their definitions, which are written to be easily understood.

The entire site can be navigated easily, and quick loading has made it ideal for my classroom.

Ken Barbalance
Science, chemistry teacher
Fairbanks, Alaska
Yogo@klbproductions.com

Modern Magazines

We all celebrate our students' creativity when they publish a literary arts magazine. Now imagine them publishing this magazine on a CD-Rom! My classes have created such a project.

By burning a CD, the students can add full-color art and photos, audio, video, graphics, and animation, as well as the traditional short stories, poems, and essays. Black-and-white photos can be augmented with color, too.

With this technology, students can publish a poem *and* read it aloud on the CD. Our CD is a fully interactive, multimedia celebration of student creativity.

Ray Gen
English Department chair
El Segundo, California
Raygen@earthlink.net

Can't Pass This Up

In my opinion, Teachers.Net (www.teachers.net) is truly a blessing to any educator regardless of level or expertise. Teachers.Net offers 45 grade level and special-interest chatboards, hundreds of lesson plans, a Web site homepage maker, mailings, job center, chatrooms, weekly live chat meetings on various topics, and much more!

Live chat sessions with internationally known authors and educators, such as Howard Gardner, Hap Palmer, and Harry Wong, are hosted by Teachers.Net in order to provide an array of professional development opportunities for educators worldwide.

I log onto Teachers.Net everyday to search for advice, lesson plans, or just to unwind with colleagues after a long day. It has enhanced my growth as an educator and has helped me further my education in graduate school. This is definitely a site to be listed among those that an educator can't live without!

Kim Tracy
Fifth grade teacher
Laurel Hill, North Carolina
KTRACY@carolina.net

A Multinational Millennium Challenge

Ours was one of 300 schools from 41 countries that took part in the AT&T Virtual Classroom Contest, a Web site design competition for multinational teams of primary and secondary students.

Each team consisted of three schools from different countries. Our students were teamed with "cyberclassmates" from the Birkdale South State School in Australia and the Doverwood School in Canada.

The teachers involved in this contest qualified for entry by passing a test conducted by AT&T.

The contest ran from September 1999 to February 2000. Our students chose a topic, researched, designed, and created the Web pages themselves. The project helped them to develop their computer, writing, communication, and technology skills.

Students learned how to use E-mail, HTML, scanners, digital cameras, and other tools. For example, students used E-mail to interview residents of Somers Point. They also learned a great deal about geography, different cultures, Internet safety, and about teamwork and responsibility.

Our parents group assisted the project by awarding us a grant for the purchase of a scanner and Web design software. Mr. Hawthorne, an art teacher, helped our students design our Web banner.

For more information about the AT&T Virtual Classroom, go to www.att.virtualclassroom.org.

To view our Web site, go to http://www.att.virtualclassroom.org/vc99/vc_45/index.html

Mary Rydzewski
Social studies teacher
Somers Point, New Jersey
Mrydz@worldnet.att.net

My favorite Software

PLATO Math Curriculum by PLATO Learning is amazingly comprehensive software for ninth and tenth grade algebra and geometry students. After using it one year, our school's Math Graduate Exit Exam passing rate jumped 7 percent!

Melissa Mainiero
High school math teacher/technology coordinator
Benton, Louisiana

TALK TO US

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wiredclassroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by Fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive the latest *NEA Today* mug!

Bytes for Beginners

Occasionally, when surfing the Web, I come across content that's labeled PDF formatted. What exactly does this mean and why can't my browser view it?

The acronym PDF stands for "Portable Document Format" and was developed by Adobe Systems, Inc., developers of the popular desktop publishing software PageMaker.

The PDF standard has become the de facto standard for distributing documents across multiple platforms—such as IBM PC, Macintosh, and Unix computers—and the Internet.

This standard is designed to support the distribution of published content where sophisticated design and layout must be preserved in order for the content to be readable and interesting.

One example: The prolific author Stephen King has just published the first installment of his new novel *The Plant*, which is available for download in PDF format (www.stephenking.com). PDF documents preserve fonts, layout, and graphics exactly as the designer intended.

So whether you're interested in reading the first installment of *The Plant* or just want to make sure your computer is ready to display PDF-formatted content in the future, you'll need to visit Adobe Systems, Inc.'s Web site (www.adobe.com).

Once there, download a software program named "Acrobat Reader," which will allow you to take advantage of PDF formatted content. It's free!

The Nation's Top Teacher

The Fiftieth National Teacher of the Year is a veteran of 35 years in the classroom. Her 145 AP English students know not to expect the ordinary from this imaginative teacher.

Bob Riha, Jr.

Marilyn Whirry's passion for teaching and willingness to try new ideas extends to even the way she sets up her classroom. Her Advanced Placement senior students at Mira Costa High in California's Manhattan Beach sit on beanbag chairs, facing each other, to facilitate conversation.

"One year I taught the traditional way, but I knew it didn't work, so I went to the beanbag chairs," Whirry explains. "The unorthodox setup helps the students realize that the class is going to be different. As my classroom was transformed, so was my teaching."

An English teacher with a master's degree in contemporary literature, Whirry makes it a priority to relate the contemporary to the classics.

"I think it's important for a teacher to keep a totally open mind," Whirry says. "And to always ask, 'Are my students learning the most they possibly can, are they reaching their potential, or do I have to change my teaching style?'"

Whirry believes strongly that an innovative teacher has the power to reach any student. But new teachers, she notes, "despite their high energy and boundless enthusiasm, don't always have the skills or knowledge to develop that energy."

After leading more than 350 professional development seminars, Whirry is convinced that a consistent, long-term program for staff development is essential to creating and maintaining good teachers.

"What I see in these workshops is teachers changing," she says. "If you can change teachers, then you can change kids, because the teachers are going back into their classrooms and doing things differently. It's so important to have teachers who are passionate about their work and their kids."

During her year-long tour as the National Teacher of the Year, Whirry says she'll advocate the importance of teaching teachers.

"We serve a purpose that no other person in society serves," notes Whirry. "We aren't parents, but while we're teaching children, we're also helping them help themselves."

President Clinton presented Whirry with the National Teacher of the Year crystal apple at White House ceremonies last May. In July, this life-long NEA member spoke to delegates attending the NEA Representative Assembly in Chicago. ✔

Her Students Are Taking Stock

Troy Mabens

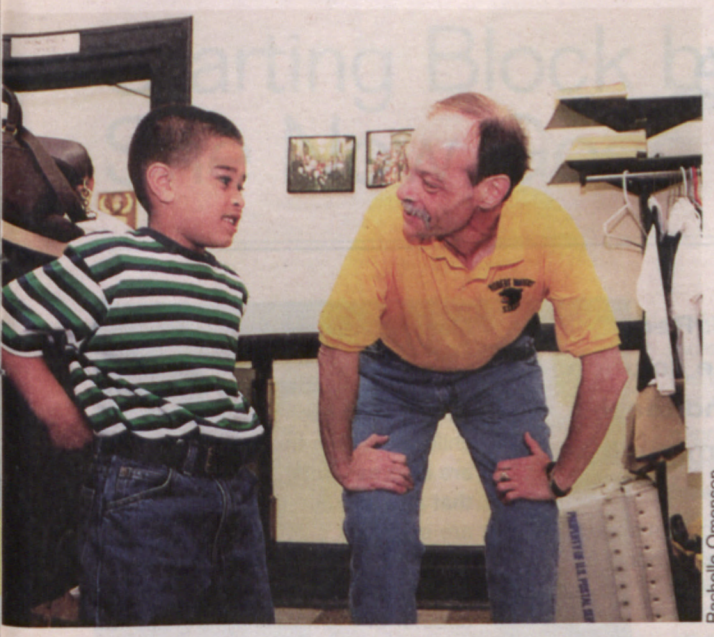
Economics isn't the dismal science to **Kali Kurdy's** students at Borah High in Boise, Idaho, thanks to an award-winning curriculum unit she's put together. Kurdy's "Economic Summit," an economic trade simulation, recently earned the National Association of Security Dealers National Teaching Award and was also honored with a $20,000 check from the National Council on Economic Education.

Kurdy developed the simulation as a way to teach her students about trade in and among the Commonwealth of Independent States. But her classes enjoyed enacting the trade sessions so much that she expanded the program's focus to all international trade. Kurdy then included other schools in the district, encouraging students to work together. Today, the Economic Summit is a statewide affair, impacting more than 3,000 students from 30 schools each year.

Students work together to research the social, political, and economic situation of an assigned country, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and then develop specific goals to improve the standard of living for its people.

Acting as economic advisors, the student teams negotiate with each other to work out beneficial trade agreements, all the while competing for scarce global resources.

"The students learn a wealth of economic information," says Kurdy. "But it also allows them to learn to articulate their position and to bargain. The compromise and cooperation are worth as much as the economics." ✔



Rachelle Omenson

NEA's National ESP of the Year

As most students are scrambling to get to their homeroom class at the tone of the tardy bell, Union City (N.J.) attendance officer **Richard Malizia** is on the streets looking for kids who should be in school, but aren't.

Recently named NEA's educational support person of the year, Malizia is the lifeline between teachers and those students who would otherwise rarely see the inside of a classroom.

"Poor attendance is one indicator of a problem," says Malizia, who has served on the NEA Board of Directors. "If we can get to that problem early and solve it, we can enhance student achievement."

An example: Malizia found that one student chronically absent only had two pairs of pants—and one pair had a hole.

"When he had to wear that pair, he didn't come to school because he was too embarrassed," says Malizia. "So we bought him a new pair of pants: problem solved!"

"I'm in the unique position of being able to go into homes and bring information back to the schools," Malizia said. "Most attendance officers live in the communities we work in, so we know the kids and their families."

Malizia has remained dedicated to public education for 25 years, as an attendance officer, a janitor, and a teacher's advocate. He's helped form an alliance between Union City teachers and school support personnel.

"Once teachers see how ESP can help them, they appreciate our roles," Malizia says. "ESP care deeply for the children we serve." ✔

On a Mission To Build Character

Barbara Lewis is a teacher—and an author—on a mission. She's determined, through her writing, to bombard students with positive role models.

"Youngsters are inundated with hundreds of thousands of negative influences from the media, politicians, sports figures, and elsewhere," says this Utah teacher, who coordinates her Park City school district's program for high-achieving students. "We have to counteract that."

The action-oriented Lewis, who thrives on conducting community problem-solving classes with youngsters, says whenever she feels the need for new material to use with students, she ends up writing a book.

"As soon as I finish one," she laughs, "I come up with another."

Her seventh and latest, *Being Your Best: Character Building for Kids 7-10,* is chock full of real-life role models for character and community service.

The examples include a Utah boy who gave a homeless man his brand-new basketball shoes and a Mexican girl who bravely told her mother the truth about squandering the family's tortilla money on candy.

The book also suggests very concrete steps kids can take at home, at school, and in their communities to become honest, caring, and responsible citizens.

"Character development begins when a child is born," says Lewis, the grandmother of three. "We need to teach kids that we all have control over what we become and that we're responsible for what we do."

For more information, call 1/800-735-7323. ✔

Teacher Guides Students to Follow Their Conscience

Letter writing is a powerful but underutilized cornerstone of democracy, **Ron Adams** believes.

Adams helps his seventh grade language arts students at Broad Meadows Middle School in Quincy, Massachusetts, realize the power of a well-written letter through "Writing Wrongs," a teaching unit he's been using for the past 10 years.

In the unit, students are asked to identify an injustice and write a formal letter to someone they believe can help end it.

The assignment has led students to such varied projects as creating a textbook about World War II's female shipyard workers and opening a floating museum celebrating Quincy's history.

Efforts by students in Adams classes have also freed four Yugoslavian students imprisoned because they asked for bilingual education and built three schools for underprivileged children abroad.

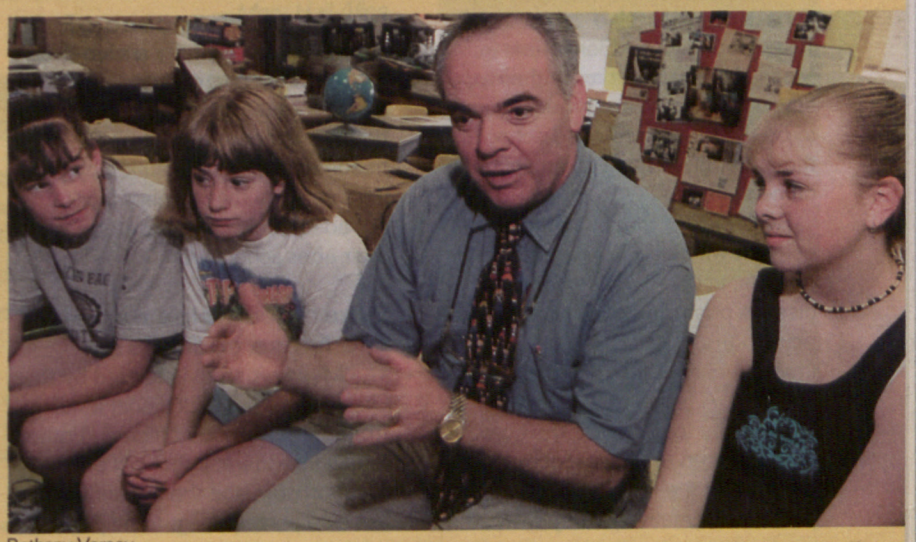
The letters Adams's students have written span the issue spectrum, from local topics like traffic to international concerns over child labor.

"If I forced the students to write about something," he says, "they would stop caring once I closed the grade book."

The kids who learn with Adams care even after they leave his class. Students as old as high school seniors convene every Friday afternoon to continue their projects.

The letter unit began as a way to reach Quincy's increasing immigrant population. Reading and writing about things that "aren't fair," Adams hoped, would help teach the district's diverse students how they should treat each other.

"We used to be known as the school for the housing project kids, and that was deeply insulting," Adams says. "Now Broad Meadows kids have a reputation as historians and activists. It's the change of attitude that has kept me motivated." ✔



Bethany Versoy

Keeping Kids Out of Trouble During After-School Hours

If kids are going to get in trouble, it's often between 3 and 7 p.m. Rena Large of the NEA Health Information Network looks at a possible solution: model after-school programs that include anti-drug messages and teach that substance abuse threatens the safety of the school and community.

How much trouble do kids get into after school?

Plenty. In 1999, 57 percent of serious juvenile crimes occurred from 3 to 7 p.m., reports the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Juveniles are more likely to be victims of violent crime between the hours of 3 and 9 p.m.

Children are finding trouble because more and more of them get no adult supervision after school.

"We need to recognize," says Dr. Steve Kelder, an expert on adolescents from the University of Texas, "that kids left unsupervised after school are more likely to exhibit behaviors that place them at higher risk for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, as well as sexual activity."

Tammy Smith

Are schools the answer?

Take a look at Kerr Elementary in Mesa, Arizona. Built more than seven years ago, the school figured to be the most vandalized school in the state, given local community crime statistics.

Residents of that community met early on with local law enforcement officials, in one parent's home, to discuss possible solutions. At one point in the meeting, the group stepped outside to survey the neighborhood. A group of kids took that opportunity to vandalize the home.

Undaunted, the entire community recognized the need for structured, positive alternatives. They worked closely with the Mesa Community Action Network to establish an after-school program.

The resulting Kerr KidsCan! program offers numerous "clubs" that expose students to a variety of skills and activities, from sports, crafts, and drama to tutoring and help with homework. Kerr KidsCan! now reaches more than 3,000 kids from five elementary schools.

As a direct result of this model after-school program, the Kerr community has seen a dramatic decrease in crime and vandalism. NEA members in the area credit the program for increasing the number of positive connections, both between students and staff and parents and school.

Is this another case of educators being asked to do more, more, more?

No. The Mesa Education Association has encouraged members to become part of the solution by helping to ensure that teacher facilitators are adequately compensated for their after-school work.

What else helps explain the Mesa success?

The Mesa program is funded by the United Way, with additional funding from the governor's office and other funding partners. Local law enforcement officers and the superintendent are also participating, to help ensure safe and orderly program operations and safe transportation home for participating students.

Are all after-school programs this successful?

The U.S. Department of Education says public schools are uniquely suited to meet the extended learning needs of students, in a safe and drug-free after-school environment.

Carefully planned programs can provide a number of services that enhance a student's daily learning, activities that range from tutoring in reading for younger children to the supplying of mentors who can guide children through challenging courses and provide positive support and supervision from caring adults.

Still, as of 1991, 70 percent of all public elementary and combined schools did not offer either before- or after-school programs. The numbers of after-school programs are increasing, but, in 1995, only 3.4 percent of the 23.5 million school-age children with working parents were enrolled in the 18,111 before- or after-school programs in public schools.

So what are the essential features of a successful after-school program?

After-school programs are most successful when they result from a collaborative community effort, as in Mesa. Consistent, knowledgeable staff who have a commitment to children and understand the social, cultural, and economic issues children face in their community are also essential, as is ensuring that an adequate number of staff are engaged.

After-school programs also need structure, but Marlene Wong, the director of Mental Health Service for the Los Angeles Unified School District, is quick to recommend that after-school programs should be less structured than the normal school day—to allow children to have down time, grab a snack, and do homework.

Wong also encourages using after-school time to teach social skills and nurture children's creative sides.

RESOURCES

- **Kerr KidsCan! is one of many successful programs creating safe school communities featured in NEA's Safe Schools Now network broadcast series. These programs all aim to help schools and their communities create more secure environments for children.**

  The first broadcast of this series for the new school year, which airs on September 28, will focus on school programs that promote student-school connectedness and steer students away from substance abuse.

  For more information, check the Web at www.safeschoolsnow.org or call 202/822-7746.

- **The National Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, operated by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, offers information on programs and initiatives related to the reduction of juvenile crime, violence, and victimization. For more, go to www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org or call 800/638-8736.**

- ***Bringing Education into the Afterschool Hours*, a U.S. Department of Education publication, provides ideas on how schools can use after-school programs to promote student achievement and meet the needs of their students and community. Among the program ideas discussed: reading, math, the arts, safe and drug-free schools, and parent involvement. To order, go to www.ed.gov or call 877/4-ED-PUBS.**

Starting Block by Block, She Now Goes the Extra Mile

Mike Brunette

"I've fought the battle of the bulge my entire life," says high school teacher Mary Heil-Allen. "Then, at 5 a.m. one rainy February morning five years ago, I started walking."

"The first weeks were painful," says Mary Heil-Allen, a Spanish teacher at Sturgeon Bay High School in Wisconsin. "All I did was count how many blocks I'd gone.

"But it got better," she notes. "I got faster and started to look forward to my mornings. I was doing three to five miles a day."

As the miles increased, so did the benefits.

"Amazingly, my migraine headaches were fewer and fewer," says Heil-Allen. "I rediscovered definition in my 47-year-old body. Then I started biking every other day. Now I lift weights. I've never felt better in my life."

It's always difficult to fit workouts into a busy educator's schedule. For Heil-Allen, the trick is to start her day at 5:00 a.m. Her pre-dawn regimen includes walking her dog or going to the local YMCA to lift weights and work out on the Nautilus machines.

"I find it energizing and calming," says Heil-Allen. "It sends me off to school with a smile on my face, ready to face the 'little dumplings.'"

"I tried the after-school routine," she adds, "but I found my energy drained. And I always had interruptions—meetings, special help sessions for kids who need it, yearbook, student council."

Heil-Allen also was racing to sporting events to watch her own 16-year-old son. And, she adds, "don't forget meals for the family!"

But these same kids—her own and her students—are part of what keeps her going now.

"Tell your kids that you're training," Heil-Allen advises. "They'll ask you, 'Did you walk this morning?'"

Though she's been working out for five years now, Heil-Allen still remembers how tough starting out can be.

"Expect to be winded at the beginning and a bit discouraged," she notes. "Remember that your body is probably suffering a bit from lack of use."

Another piece of advice: "Stretch, stretch, stretch. And don't overdo it at the beginning. Take it easy, even if it's just walking a few blocks."

Heil-Allen also suggests that fitness newbies "keep a journal."

"If not every day, record something at least once a week," she says. "Record your highs and lows, your triumphs. Read and reread them. They'll motivate you."

For Heil-Allen, leading a physically active lifestyle beats counting calories or downing diet drinks.

"I haven't dieted," she says. "I just learned that an aging body needs a jumpstart to get the metabolism running. What works for me is to keep the body conditioned, the spirit lifted, and the stress reduced."

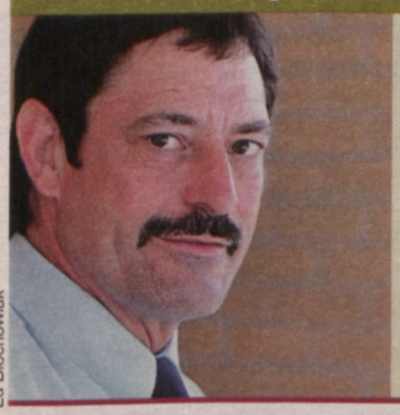
Easy Steps: Tips from a Walker

1. Buy a good pair of walking/running shoes.
2. Find someone to walk with, your spouse or significant other, a neighbor, a Labrador retriever.
3. Start slow and easy.
4. Increase your pace and distance. Three miles a day can be completed in as little as 35 minutes.
5. Find a place to go indoors when the weather is inclement. For me, it's the local YMCA.
6. Don't give up. Listen to CDs. I even take along some of my son's CDs, like Queen's *We Are the Champions of the World.*
7. Keep walking.
8. Weigh yourself once a week. You'll be surprised after a month.
9. Reward yourself occasionally — a new dress or pants, even a pecan roll!

—Mary Heil-Allen

Quick Tip

Steve Stevens, NEA Member



Ed Blochowiak

"When considering body-shaping goals, think in terms of months rather than weeks or days. The most common reason given for abandoning a fitness routine is that you don't see results quickly enough."

"You need patience, patience, and more patience.

"Patience is not a muscle that can be developed. It is the realization that muscle toning and development require time and consistency."

Steve Stevens is a long-time weightlifter, lifting several times a week in the school's weight room, which he developed. Many students lift after school with him and seek his advice for personal weight training. Stevens teaches American history and AP government at Latta High School in Ada, Oklahoma.

NEA HIN

From the **NEA Health Information Network**

■ New Partnership for Women's Health

The NEA Health Information Network is partnering with Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, to distribute *Healthy Women Healthy Lives.* This new grassroots women's health program offers a free step-by-step *Facilitator's Manual* for coordinating local health education forums focusing on women's health after menopause. Local Hadassah chapters are available to provide assistance in local program development. For more information, call 800/664-JOIN or send an E-mail to womenshealth@hadassah.org.

■ Drug-Free Youth

Keeping Youth Drug Free: A Guide for Parents, Grandparents, Elders, Mentors, and Other Caregivers provides parents and caregivers of seven- to 13-year-olds facts and resources on alcohol and drugs. Free copies are available from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. Visit the Web at www.health.org or call 800/729-6686 (TDD 800/487-4889).

■ More on Drug Prevention Strategies

The most effective strategies for preventing drug use, keeping drugs out of neighborhoods and schools, and providing a secure environment for all people incorporate cooperative efforts that mobilize and involve all elements of a community. Learn more about best practices in prevention from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, on the Web at www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/prevent/prevent.html.

■ Free Mental Health Information

The Knowledge Exchange Network, a service of the Center for Mental Health Services, offers information about mental health through a toll-free number (800/789-2647). Its Web site, at www.mentalhealth.org, includes a state-by-state listing of mental health agencies and contacts.

The 2000 NEA Representative Assembly

At NEA's annual convention, held this year in Chicago, delegates pledge to protect kids and public schools.

William Wagner won't be competing in the Olympics this September. But for a week this past July, as a delegate to the annual NEA Representative Assembly, this high school biology teacher from Forty Fort, Pennsylvania, felt just like an Olympian.

At an NEA RA, Wagner smiles, "you start out running, swim through a sea of people, and rely on the endurance of an Olympic athlete to make it to the end."

Wagner and nearly 10,000 other NEA members displayed that endurance this July in Chicago, this year's RA site, through four full days of discussion and debate that typically started at 7 a.m., in state caucus meetings, and didn't end until 6 p.m., the close of each day's convention business sessions.

Over the course of those long days, Wagner and his fellow delegates—all elected to represent their colleagues back home—took on just about every tough issue facing NEA members, everything from compensation and high-stakes testing to vouchers and the upcoming November elections.

This year's RA debates were often stormy, particularly on alternate approaches to compensation, but delegates left Chicago united and committed to protecting all children's right to a quality public education.

To back up that commitment, delegates voted, by a two-to-one margin, to raise dues by $5 to counter attacks on public education—and better promote the good things happening in today's public schools.

Sixty percent of the funds raised by this increase will go to help NEA state affiliates fight back against proposals to enact private school tuition vouchers and other attacks on public schools.

The rest of the funding will finance new media campaigns to help create a better image for public education and the men and women who work in America's public schools.

NEA state affiliates, Oregon Education Association President James Sager told delegates, desperately need this support.

"Next year, 26 states will fight vouchers at the ballot box and in the legislature," noted Sager, adding that, in Oregon alone, NEA members will confront 11 hostile inititatives, including measures that would cut school funding up to 30 percent and tie teacher salaries to student test scores.

Salaries and compensation proved to be the RA's hottest debate topic. Delegates spoke out repeatedly about the need to increase pay for teachers and other school staff. And they reiterated NEA's commitment to a single salary schedule that rewards experience and knowledge—proven factors that help boost student achievement.

But delegates didn't agree over the value of alternate approaches to compensation that go beyond the single salary schedule, such as pay plans that award group bonuses to staff at schools that meet certain achievement goals. After two hours of debate, delegates rejected a proposal that would have established NEA criteria for alternative compensation programs.

Considerably less contentious were the elections for NEA officers. Delegates re-elected NEA Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Van Roekel, a high school math teacher from Arizona, and NEA Executive Committee members Iona Holloway, a classroom aide from Louisiana, and Dan Sakota, a junior high school math teacher from Idaho.

By a nine-to-one margin, in secret-ballot voting, delegates also voted to recommend the Presidential candidacy of Al Gore. On the RA's last morning, Vice President Gore came to Chicago's McCormick Place Convention Center to thank delegates for that resounding show of support.

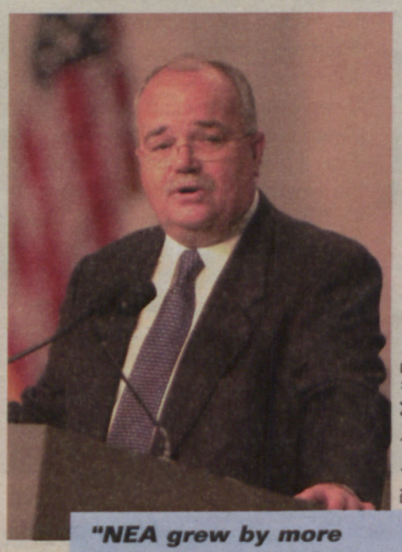
"I will never, ever support private school vouchers," Gore told the Assembly.

Added the Vice President: "Are you ready to fight—and win—for public education?"

The delegates answered with cheers.

Also cheered heartily, with a long standing ovation, was NEA Executive Director Don Cameron, the former junior high teacher from Birmingham, Michigan, who's held NEA's top staff slot since 1983. Cameron will be retiring later this year, and, in his last RA address as executive director, he asked delegates to help "launch education into the 21st century."

"Job number one for NEA," said Cameron, "is to improve student achievement and to secure for our members the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to accomplish this task."



"NEA grew by more than 76,000 members last school year. By any measure, we are powerful. But we have a responsibility to use our power wisely and, I believe, much more assertively on behalf of America's children."

Photos by Matt Ferguson

"One out of every 100 Americans is a member of NEA. The other 99—every single American—are touched by your work."

You can find complete coverage of this year's NEA Representative Assembly, including the full text of all adopted new business and major convention addresses, on the Web at www.nea.org/ra.

Where We Stand

Each year, the NEA members elected as delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly adopt Resolutions that spell out exactly where our Association stands on the many different issues that impact education and educators.

The complete text of this year's Resolutions appears on the Internet at www.nea.org/resolutions.

At this Web site, you can search the Resolutions by keywords to easily locate the specific Resolutions on the topics that most interest you.

If you don't have Web access and would like to have a printed copy of the Resolutions, please mail your request to *NEA Today*. A printed copy will be mailed to you.

The Resolutions are organized around 10 basic goals set out in the Preamble to the NEA Constitution. Working within these categories, delegates to the 2000 Representative Assembly revised a number of NEA Resolutions and added several others.

You'll find, starting below, the complete text of all the Resolutions that have been either been added or significantly revised since last year.

The delegates to the 2000 NEA RA debated and adopted NEA policy on a host of issues that impact education.

Highlights from NEA Resolutions

A. Serve As The National Voice For Education

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

A-3. Understanding and Support of Public Education

The National Education Association recognizes its responsibility to promote an understanding of the history and continuing importance of public education and to support public education and public education employees. The Association encourages wide community and parental participation in achieving and maintaining educational excellence. The Association believes that school boards and other stakeholders also have a responsibility to promote public understanding of the importance of public schools.

The Association also believes that the success of our nation depends upon high standards of educational excellence. The Association supports a positive school environment, excellence in teaching, high standards for student behavior and achievement, and extensive parental involvement. The Association also recognizes its responsibility to promote excellence in public education and supports efforts to improve it. (1969, 2000)

A-12. School Accountability and Improvement

The National Education Association supports effective and fair school accountability systems. The Association believes that these systems must promote high levels of student achievement and ensure that the best teaching practices are supported and utilized. The Association also believes that the focus of the accountability system must be on the school, not on individual stakeholders, as the unit for evaluation and improvement of student learning. Development and implementation of the accountability system must ensure that the stakeholders at the school, district, state, and national levels share the responsibility for establishing clear goals, adopting high standards for student achievement, and providing the necessary resources and support systems.

The Association further believes that a school accountability system must—

a. Promote educational excellence

b. Ensure the alignment of standards, assessments, and curricula

c. Balance its focus on school context, process, and student performance

d. Provide professional development for all education employees prior to implementation of the system

e. Set high standards for student learning, levels of support by each stakeholder, and clearly defined goals for the school as a unit

f. Use multiple assessment tools and sources of data that are valid and reliable

g. Include necessary accommodations and modifications to maximize the success of all students

h. Include measures to improve school accountability

i. Identify how the school as a unit achieves its goals

j. Identify the quality, quantity, and impact of support provided by each stakeholder

k. Identify and address the internal and external factors that impact student learning and achievement

l. Provide for the timely dissemination of results to all stakeholders

m. Be applied in a fair and equitable manner

n. Include periodic evaluation and modification of the system

o. Provide for the development of a school improvement plan.

The Association believes that the school improvement process must, as a minimum—

a. Involve all school staff as active partners in the development of the plan

b. Provide the resources and assistance necessary to accomplish the plan

c. Identify the responsibilities of each stakeholder—students, education employees, parents/guardians, community members, government, policymakers, social agencies, and taxpayers—in the implementation of the plan

d. Provide time for planning, implementation, and reassessment

e. Be consistent with education employees' rights and responsibilities as set forth in laws, contracts, policies and/or local agreement processes. (1971, 2000)

FINANCING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

A-13. Financial Support of Public Education

The National Education Association believes that public education must be supported from public tax sources. The Association also believes that—

a. An increasing portion of public funds should be for direct instruction of students.

b. The amount of aid must be generally predictable for long-range planning and specifically predictable for year-to-year planning.

c. Present programs of specific aid must be expanded and improved by consolidation and simplification of administration.

d. Tax revision favorable to public education should be encouraged and continually reviewed at every governmental level.

e. Local governing boards must be fiscally independent, and restrictive limits must not be imposed on their budgets or long-term borrowing.

f. The state and local share of finance must be derived from a tax system that is balanced and complementary in nature, includes all broad-based taxes, reduces the excessive reliance on property taxes, and protects subsistence income.

g. Provisions must be made for research, development, implementation, continuation, and improvement in education practices. Funding must be included for resources such as personnel, time for staff planning, training and professional development, facilities, equipment, and materials.

h. State and federal mandates affecting public education programs must be accompanied by adequate funding.

i. School trust lands must be administered with the generation of funds for public education as a primary goal and in a manner that ensures the sustainable use of those lands by current and future generations. State school trust funds should be fairly compensated by the federal government for school trust lands included in national parks, monuments, or wilderness areas.

j. In order to prevent both the devastating loss of revenues caused by resource management decisions and to prevent unsustainable levels of resource utilization from being necessitated by declining public school funding, efforts to stabilize the levels of public school funding derived from state and federal lands should be made at the state and federal levels.

k. Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, and sexual orientation stereotypes in the public schools.

l. Public funds must not be expended for any materials used to promote race, gender, or sexual orientation stereotypes and/or biases.

m. Public funds must not be expended in institutions where either specific programs or the institution has been found guilty of discrimination.

n. Categorical funding must be assured in areas such as special education, bilingual/English as a second language, class size reduction, and the economically/educationally disadvantaged.

o. Any institution, agency, or individual receiving financial aid from federal, state, or local governments must adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

The Association opposes providing any public revenues to sectarian pre-K through 12 schools. The Association also opposes providing such revenues to nonsectarian pre-K through 12 private schools or to nonpublic school students in pre-K through 12 education, unless such revenues are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. (1977, 2000)

A-14. Federal Financial Support for Education

The National Education Association believes that the federal government has a legitimate and proper concern and responsibility for the quality of public education provided to its citizens.

The federal government should—

a. Ensure equality of educational opportunity for all

b. Collect basic data to be used in public schools and to engage in research, development, and consultation activities that support quality state and local education programs

c. Grant supplemental aid to states that are not able to raise adequate funds to provide all students with a high-quality education and to provide funding to support state and local government efforts in pursuit of national interests in public education.

Therefore, federal funding formulas should reflect the most current, accurate accounting of the public school population, measurements of poverty, and the state's ability to raise adequate funds. The Association also believes that funding for federal programs should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states.

The Association further believes that there should be federal support for education whereby:

a. The federal government assumes a full partnership role with local school districts by providing significant levels of federal funding for elementary and secondary education through a program of general aid and categorical assistance.

b. Federal education funding is clear and identifiable within the federal budget.

c. Federally funded instructional programs have maximum teacher involvement in their development at the federal level and must be implemented at the local level only after the involvement and approval of the recognized bargaining agent or local affiliate.

d. Advisory committees for federally funded programs reflect the ethnic makeup of local communities and maintain a gender balance to ensure accountability and equity. Parents/guardians, students, and educators should be included as members of these committees.

e. The amount of aid is generally predictable for long-range planning and specifically predictable for year-to-year planning.

f. Federal legislation complies with civil rights statutes and is consistent with the constitutional provision respecting the establishment of religion and provides for judicial review as to its constitutionality.

g. Categorical funding is assured in areas such as special education, bilingual/English as a second language, and the economically/educationally disadvantaged.

The Association believes that federal monies budgeted for pre-K through 12 education must be equitably expended for public education at the pre-K through 12 level. The Association opposes any federal legislation, laws, or regulations that provide funds, goods, or services to sectarian schools. The Association also opposes providing such funds, goods, or services to nonsectarian pre-K through 12 private schools or to nonpublic school students in pre-K through 12 education, unless those funds, goods, or services are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. The Association condemns and deplores federal policies and programs that serve to undermine America's historical commitment to free public education. (1983, 2000)

A-22. Privatization and Subcontracting Programs

The National Education Association believes in promoting the importance of quality public education, the principle of separation of church and state, the economic security of public education employees, and racial integration in the public schools.

The Association opposes any privatization or subcontracting arrangement that—

a. Has the potential to reduce the resources that otherwise would be available to achieve and/or maintain a system of quality public education, or the potential to otherwise negatively impact on public education

b. Allows public funds to be used for religious education or other religious purposes, or that otherwise weakens the wall of separation between church and state

c. Places the economic security of public education employees at risk, without regard to individual job performance, so that the services in question can be performed by private sector employees

d. Replaces services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by the public schools

e. Has the purpose or effect of causing or maintaining racial segregation in the public schools

f. Has not been agreed to by the affected affiliate. (2000)

A-23. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits

The National Education Association believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other funding arrangements that use tax monies to subsidize pre-K through 12 private school education can undermine public education, reduce the support needed to fund public education adequately, weaken the wall of separation between church and state, and cause racial, economic, and social segregation of students.

The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools. The Association also opposes any such arrangements that pay for students to attend nonsectarian

pre-K through 12 private schools in order to obtain educational services that are available to them in public schools to which they have reasonable access. (1970, 2000)

A-25. For-Profit Schools

The National Education Association believes that there is an inherent conflict between serving the needs of children and serving the needs of stockholders in an educational setting. The Association therefore opposes education for profit. (2000)

QUALITY EDUCATION

A-28. Improving Educational Facilities

The National Education Association believes that many educational facilities are in a state of decay, neglect, and/or deterioration. The Association supports funding to modernize, expand, replace, and/or maintain these facilities in order to provide a safe and effective teaching and learning environment for students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the community, parents/guardians, students, and education employees must be effectively involved in the development of plans to modernize, expand, and/or replace facilities. (1969, 2000)

A-29. Charter and Nontraditional Public School Options

The National Education Association supports innovation in public education. The Association believes that when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, all affected public education employees must be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs.

The Association also believes that plans should not negatively impact the regular public school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed education professionals, and financial responsibility.

Programs must be adequately funded, must comply with all state laws applicable to regular public schools, must include start-up resources, must not divert current funds from the regular public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation, as well as adequate attendance and record-keeping procedures. (1993, 2000)

B. Advance The Cause of Education For All Individuals

LIFELONG LEARNING

B-2. Independent Reading Skills

The National Education Association believes that it is critical that students become independent readers to succeed in school and life. Reading instruction, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning in all content areas and for achieving high standards. Teachers at all levels should be provided adequate resources, including a fully funded and staffed library/media center and encouraged to use their expertise to address the diverse needs of students.

The Association also believes that teachers' efforts to value and promote reading should be supported by parents/guardians, librarians, media specialists, other education employees, and communities. (1998, 2000)

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS

B-21. Gifted, Talented, and Creative Students

The National Education Association believes that there must be educational programs and services for gifted, talented, and creative children, and supports federal funding for gifted education. The Association also believes that there must be well-developed criteria and guidelines for identifying and teaching these students. Such identification must not discriminate on any basis other than the exceptionality being identified.

The Association further believes that professional development programs in gifted and talented education must be provided for all appropriate education employees.

The Association urges its affiliates to promote the development and implementation of such services to gifted children and support for all educators working with this special needs population. (1980, 2000)

CURRICULUM CONTENT

B-34. School-to-Work/Career Education

The National Education Association believes that a goal of public education is to provide all individuals, preschool through adulthood, opportunities to become effective, responsible, productive citizens. To achieve this goal, career education must be interwoven into the total educational system and should include programs in gender-free career awareness and exploration to aid students in career course selection. These programs should be combined with cooperative efforts on the part of educators and leaders from labor, business, and the community to provide school-to-work experiences that meet rigorous academic standards and are accorded the same level of accreditation as other education programs.

The Association also believes that educational programs for all students should offer a variety of exploratory career experiences that are developmentally appropriate. In addition, these programs should enhance self-esteem and assure equal opportunity for career development and equal access to college and university admissions. (1976, 2000)

LEARNING ISSUES NOT RELATED TO SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

B-56. Standardized Testing of Students

The National Education Association believes that standardized tests should only be used to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests are most useful when selected by educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate the design and use of a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test is mandated at the state or the national level, it should only be used to evaluate programs toward meeting state or national standards and/or goals.

The Association opposes the use of standardized tests when—

a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding

b. Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states

c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision making

d. They do not match the developmental levels or language proficiency of the student

e. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status

f. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test

g. Testing programs or tests limit or supplant instructional time.

The administration of a standardized test includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders in the purpose of the test, the meaning of test results, and the accurate interpretation of conclusions. (1978, 2000)

C. Promote the Health and Welfare of Children and/or Students

HEALTH, WELFARE, SAFETY

C-23. School Guidance and Counseling Programs

The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system pre-K through college. Such programs should be provided through a maximum counselor/student ratio of 1:250 by appropriately certified and/or licensed school counselors who have been trained to support students in realizing their full potential in all areas of growth and achievement. (1987, 2000)

C-25. Safe and Effective School Climate

The National Education Association believes that a safe and effective school climate is necessary for promoting educational excellence in public schools.

The Association also believes that a safe and effective school has a positive environment in which education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community care for, communicate with, respect, understand, and trust each other. (1987, 2000)

C-26. Safe and Orderly School Communities

The National Education Association believes that all education employees, parents/guardians, students, school governing boards, and community members and agencies must work cooperatively to establish and maintain safe and orderly school communities. Students and education employees should be safe from physical, verbal, and psychological violence, the threat thereof, and all forms of harassment.

The Association also believes that both schools and school districts must have written discipline plans and procedures that are fair, equitable, and consistently enforced and procedures for the safe and orderly conduct of school activities and events. The Association further believes that there must be written safety plans for crisis situations. There should be procedures to prevent all types of harassment and to eliminate any harassment that might occur. Plans and procedures regarding discipline and/or harassment must include due process.

The Association believes that students must be taught strategies and skills, including conflict resolution, that develop respect, self-discipline, and self-control. Students must learn to distinguish between their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. There should be appropriate services and placement within regular education and alternative education programs and/or with state and/or community agencies for students who disrupt the learning environment or who are dangerous to other students, education employees, and themselves.

The Association also believes that appropriate school behavior begins and is reinforced in the home. Parents/guardians of children who are disruptive often need support and training in order to reduce negative behavior and increase student learning. Programs that provide assistance and training in child development, effective parenting skills, and strategies for dealing with disruptive students should be available for parents/guardians. Schools can be instrumental in identifying and recommending strategies that can assist parents/guardians. (1994, 2000)

D-2. Teacher Preparation Programs: Recruitment

The National Education Association believes that strong programs of teacher recruitment are necessary to maintain and enhance the teaching profession. Such programs should emphasize the recruitment of underrepresented candidates and should include a policy of affirmative recruitment. Preteaching programs and recruitment efforts should be developed at high schools and community/junior colleges in conjunction with institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs. These efforts should include the active participation of practicing pre-K through 12 teachers.

The Association also believes that individuals interested in teaching as a career should attend institutions accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Counselors and advisers should inform students of the advantages of attending NCATE-accredited institutions.

Federally financed loan and grant programs should be established to encourage students to become professional educators. Progressive forgiveness of the loan should be based upon the number of years of professional service.

Grants should be secured from both public and private sources to assist students planning to pursue a career in education. (1990, 2000)

D. Promote Professional Excellence Among Educators

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

D-4. Teacher Preparation Programs: Admissions

The National Education Association believes that requirements for admission into teacher preparation programs must be based upon standards established and maintained by the profession. These requirements must be rigorous yet flexible enough to allow admittance to those who demonstrate potential for effective practice. The requirements and the selection process must be nondiscriminatory.

The Association also believes that admission to teacher preparation programs should be based on multiple considerations, such as recommendations of faculty, grade-point average, personal interviews, portfolio reviews, and recommendations of persons in related fields. Standardized achievement test scores must not be the sole basis for admission.

The Association urges appropriate state agencies to monitor projected needs by certification areas and to inform teacher preparation institutions of those needs on a continuing basis. Teacher preparation institutions should counsel and prepare prospective teachers in numbers consistent with projected needs. (1970, 2000)

D-6. Teacher Preparation Programs: Content and Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must—

a. Involve practicing, licensed pre-K through adult education teachers in the design, implementation, evaluation, and systematic change of the program

b. Involve students preparing to teach in the evaluation and improvement of the program

c. Involve teacher educators who are licensed and practicing in their field of expertise and who also demonstrate practical knowledge of schools and classroom teaching

d. Include a policy of affirmative recruitment

e. Include tests, reports, student teaching, portfolio reviews, and other measures of performance designed to assess progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching

f. Require courses in the liberal arts, subject or grade-level specialty, reading, methodologies for the instruction of students with limited English proficiency, and professional studies that include learning theories, curriculum design, classroom management, behavior management, discipline, student assessment, school accountability, and teaching techniques

g. Include instruction and field experience in the uses of appropriate technology for managing and advancing instruction

h. Include instructional content and experience that address our multicultural, multi-ethnic diversity, recognize the contributions of ethnic and other minorities, and provide techniques for teaching culturally diverse students

i. Involve students preparing to teach in recognizing biases and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in creating a bias-free environment

j. Include instructional content and experience in research and information skills, group processes, shared decision making, strategic planning, the dynamics of intergroup communications, peace and conflict resolution, human growth and development, the changing role of the family, exceptional behaviors, and human relations

k. Include a variety of field experiences throughout the preparation program culminating in clinical practice

l. Include accurate instructional content on the evolution of professional teacher organizations and the advances in the areas of job contracts, salary schedules, benefit programs, and working conditions

m. Include instruction and practical experiences in the processes, strategies, realities, responsibilities, and challenges of shared decision making, problem-solving, and strategic planning

n. Include instructional content in awareness and educational programs of all special education areas recognized by federal law

o. Provide access to professional and preprofessional organizations related to the education profession and areas of certification

p. Be evaluated and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

q. Be funded at a level that ensures that NCATE accreditation is achieved and maintained. (1970, 2000)

D-9. Teacher Induction

The National Education Association believes that teacher induction is an integral part of an ongoing systemic approach to examining teaching in relation to student learning. It facilitates the transition of new teachers into the profession, promotes the retention of successful teachers, and provides a system of support for veteran teachers experiencing a change in grade level, type of assignments, job site, or cultural environment. The Association also believes that an effective induction process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that encourages collaboration and inquiry through formal and informal systems of collegial support.

The Association further believes that the induction process includes critical analysis and cognitive and reflective activities that support the development of exemplary teaching practices and enhances professional development. The induction process for new teachers must be mandatory, be at least one year in duration, and include a mentoring program. The induction process for veteran teachers must be flexible and provide support based upon changes in their professional assignments.

The Association encourages its affiliates to be involved in the development of standards for teacher induction and in the design and implementation of the process. (1999, 2000)

COMPETENCY

D-17. Professional Development in Behavior Management, Discipline, Order, and Safety

The National Education Association believes that behavior management, discipline, order, and safety in schools and school districts are essential to ensure student success. The Association also believes that all education employees must be provided professional development in behavior management, discipline, conflict resolution, safety plans and emergency procedures, emergency lifesaving techniques, and crisis management. (1994, 2000)

D-21. Competency Testing of Licensed Teachers

The National Education Association believes that competency testing must not be used as a condition of employment, license retention, evaluation, placement, ranking, or promotion of licensed teachers. (1969, 2000)

F. Protect the Rights of Education Employees and Advance Their Interests and Welfare

BARGAINING ISSUES

F-8. Basic Contract Standards

The National Education Association believes that collective bargaining agreements between education employees and their employers should contain certain standard contractual concepts. The Association also believes that, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, these concepts should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees. These concepts include—

a. A grievance procedure that terminates with final and binding arbitration

b. Just cause for any disciplinary action with guaranteed due process through final and binding arbitration and continuation of all employee rights, including full compensation and job security

c. A seniority list that is updated, published, and distributed annually

d. Layoff and recall based only on seniority as bargaining unit members, licensure/certification, and, to the extent legally permissible, affirmative action

e. Employer-paid fringe benefits, including but

not limited to comprehensive health, life, dental, vision, and income protection insurance and employee assistance programs, that fully cover bargaining unit members, domestic partners, and their families

f. Membership in the association or the payment of a fair-share fee as a condition of employment

g. Required posting of all vacant or newly created positions along with the right of bargaining unit members to apply for these positions

h. Unassigned preparation, planning, and travel time as applicable for all members of the bargaining unit

i. Specified class size, teaching load, and job description

j. A duty-free lunch period of not less than 30 minutes for all members of the bargaining unit

k. Nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members

l. Contractually defined procedures for evaluation and promotion

m. Released time for association business with full pay and fringe benefits

n. Parental/child rearing leave for employees to provide care for natural or adopted children

o. Contractually defined procedures for ensuring education employee decision making in curriculum design and related instructional management and reporting systems

p. Time during the regular work day and work year for education employees to plan, to engage in professional development, to work on curriculum and assessment, to mentor and be mentored, and to provide professional leadership

q. Salary schedules based upon preparation, professional growth, and length of service and excluding any form of merit pay except in institutions of higher education where it has been bargained

r. Placement and advancement on the salary schedule based on qualifications and number of years of experience in the profession

s. Extracurricular and extra-duty assignments filled on a voluntary basis and compensated at no less than the employee's regular rate of pay

t. Protection from being required to participate in community service

u. Retirement benefits based on all income derived from school employment, including extracurricular and extra-duty pay

v. Clearly defined bargaining unit membership

w. A guaranteed safe and healthy working environment

x. The school calendar

y. Protection from unilateral changes in terms or conditions of employment

z. Provisions to define class loads, student contact hours, and contract hours for instructors who are involved in distance education, and to guarantee that technology and distance education are not used to supplant employees. (1989, 2000)

F-9. Salaries and Other Compensation

The National Education Association believes that salary and other compensation structures for education employees are matters for collective bargaining. The Association also believes that any proposed or legislated salary and other compensation structure should not bypass or undermine the bargaining process or negotiated agreements. The Association further believes that, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, salary schedules should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.

The Association believes that salary schedules should—

a. Provide for entry-level salaries and career earnings comparable to those of other professions and occupations with similar preparation and responsibilities and be structured to provide compensation levels that encourage classroom teachers to remain in the classroom and support personnel in the educational setting

b. Be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities, and full length of service

c. Assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory

d. Provide additional compensation for certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

e. Provide and maintain structural integrity through the use of an index or percentage guide for experience increments and levels of academic preparation

f. Assure that salary paid for summer employment, continuing education programs, extended contracts, conducting employee training or workshops, and extra duty is not less than the rate for regular pay

g. Assure that salaries paid in nontraditional adult and alternative programs be on par with salaries paid in traditional programs and that any personnel serving lower socioeconomic groups not be paid less than equivalent educational professionals providing similar service to higher socioeconomic groups

h. Define "salary increase" to mean the exact monetary differential between the existing salary schedule and the proposed salary schedule—exclusive of incremental adjustments—and all basic benefits.

The Association opposes providing additional compensation to attract and/or retain education employees in hard-to-recruit positions.

The Association also believes that local affiliates can best promote the economic welfare of all education employees, regardless of source of funding, by following the salary standards developed at the state and national levels.

The Association further believes that performance pay schedules, such as merit pay or any other system of compensation based on an evaluation of an education employee's performance, are inappropriate.

The Association believes that its affiliates should seek the repeal of laws limiting maximum salaries and benefits for education employees.

The Association also believes that there should be no limit to the number of years of experience an education employee can transfer.

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2000)

F-10. Benefits

The National Education Association believes that benefit structures should be subject to collective bargaining or, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment. Benefits should include but not be limited to—

a. Comprehensive insurance programs
   1. Health
   2. Dental
   3. Vision
   4. Hearing
   5. Life
   6. Legal
   7. Workers' compensation
   8. Long-term physical and mental disability

b. Paid leaves
   1. Sick leave with unlimited accumulation
   2. Personal leave with unlimited accumulation
   3. Bereavement leave
   4. Parental leave, including adoption
   5. Dependent care leave
   6. Sabbatical leave
   7. Professional leave
   8. Association leave
   9. Religious leave

c. Additional remuneration
   1. Severance pay
   2. Tuition reimbursement
   3. Retirement compensation
   4. Unemployment compensation
   5. Benefit extension for laid-off employees

d. Personal assistance
   1. Personal assault protection, and in the event of assault, counseling services and leave that is not subject to sick or personal leave
   2. Employee assistance program
   3. Reimbursement for damages to or loss of personal property at work site
   4. Child care center
   5. An opportunity to participate in a cafeteria-type plan or plan authorized by Section 125 of the U.S. Federal Tax Code.

The Association also believes that education employees and their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents should have equal access to all benefits applicable to them.

The Association further believes that comprehensive insurance programs should be provided for education employees on official leave of absence or parental leave.

The Association believes that provisions should be made for retirees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents at their option to continue in the comprehensive health, dental, hearing, and vision programs.

The Association also believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2000)

PROTECTION OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

F-26. Members Injured on the Job

The National Education Association believes that the legal rights of members injured on the job need to be protected.

The Association encourages its state affiliates to assist members injured on the job so that those members have access to information regarding employment-related injuries and so that state affiliates may protect the rights of those members. (2000)

F-28. Subcontracting/Contracting Out

The National Education Association believes that public school services should be performed by public education employees. The Association opposes, in public school districts and educational institutions, subcontracting/contracting out arrangements that—

a. Transfer or displace education employees

b. Replace full-time positions with temporary, part-time or volunteer workers

c. Replace services that are, or could feasibly be, provided by public education employees

d. Abrogate previously contracted benefits, reduce compensation, deny fringe benefits, and/or reduce or eliminate accumulated retirement experience and benefits

e. Have not been agreed to by the affected affiliate.

Where subcontracting exists, the Association believes that all personnel who are employed through the subcontractor to work in the school district or educational institution must meet the highest standards of accountability. The subcontractor must conduct background checks prior to allowing employees to work in the school district or educational institution and submit validation of its findings to the school district or educational institution and must provide continuing evaluation and supervision of these employees. The Association insists that such criminal background checks must provide that—

a. Information collected will not be released to boards of education in a form other than a statement of qualification but be kept by the investigating state or national agency

b. Every employee or potential employee has a right to due process and access to records

c. Clear, specific, observable, and objective evidence of rehabilitation for past offenses is included

d. Any fee for background checks shall not be borne by the employee or potential employee. (1977, 2000)

F-32. Protection of Education Employee Advocates

The National Education Association believes that education employees have the right to organize and to serve as advocates for education employees, students, and parents/guardians. The Association also believes that every member has the right and obligation to participate in the Association without fear, intimidation, or retribution.

The Association further believes that governing boards, administrators, and public officials must respect education employees and their right to exercise constitutional guarantees and condemns those who attempt to fire, demote, transfer, or give punitive assignments to education employees for their leadership in education employee organizations or for questioning apparent violations of their terms of employment.

The Association believes that school board policies should allow the provision of released time without loss of pay for those who are fulfilling leadership responsibilities, attending meetings, appearing in court in their roles as advocates, or participating in other Association activities. The Association also believes that, for conducting association business, its affiliates should be allowed to use school property without censorship, restraint, or other interference. (1976, 2000)

F-50. Substitute Teachers

The National Education Association believes in the importance of employing professional educators to fulfill the critical role of substitute teachers. The Association also believes that substitute teachers perform a vital function in the maintenance and continuity of daily education.

In order to achieve and maintain the highest standards of student learning and professional practice, and to ensure quality instruction in every classroom every day, the Association further believes that substitute teachers must—

a. Meet the same standards as other licensed teachers within the state

b. Receive professional compensation and benefits

c. Receive continuous professional development

d. Be provided with materials and information appropriate to the position in which they are substituting

e. Be entitled to and supported by state and national affiliates in collective bargaining.

The Association condemns the practice of assigning substitute teachers to regular positions for an extended duration of time. Positions created by extended absence should be filled by available licensed teachers who are eligible to be placed on contractual status by the school district.

The Association opposes the practice of replacing absent teachers by dispersing students to other classrooms. The Association also opposes the use of individuals such as educational support personnel, part-time employees, or employees hired through private agencies to cover classes. The Association further opposes requiring teachers to substitute during their preparation time.

The Association believes that school districts must provide full compensation for licensed teachers who substitute for personnel on extended leave. (1975, 2000)

RETIREMENT/SOCIAL SECURITY

F-56. Investment of Retirement System Assets and Protection of Earned Benefits

The National Education Association believes that retirement system assets can be invested in any type of investment that plays an appropriate role in achieving risk and return objectives reasonably suited to the retirement program. In the investment and management of retirement systems assets, and in a manner consistent with their fiduciary responsibilities and all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, trustees should, among other circumstances, consider—

a. General economic conditions

b. The possible effect of inflation or deflation

c. The role that each investment or course of action plays within the overall portfolio of the retirement program

d. The expected total return from income and appreciation of capital

e. Needs for liquidity, regularity of income, and preservation or appreciation of capital

f. The adequacy of funding for defined benefit plans based on reasonable actuarial factors

g. Protection of the long-term employment interests and opportunities of participants in the plan

h. Opposition to investments in corporations whose policies or expenditures of funds undermine child welfare and/or public education, when other investments provide equivalent benefits to retirement system members.

Boards of trustees charged with the authority to invest and manage the assets of public employee retirement systems should adopt a statement of investment objectives and policies for each retirement program that include—

a. The desired rate of return on assets overall

b. The desired rate of return and acceptable levels of risk for each asset class

c. Asset allocation goals

d. Guidelines for the delegation of authority

e. Information on the types of reports to be used to evaluate performance.

The Association also believes that the boards of trustees of education employee retirement systems should make every effort, consistent with their fiduciary obligations, to participate in the decision-making process of corporations in which the systems hold stock by casting stockholder votes that benefit the interests of the participants and beneficiaries of the retirement systems and those of the united education profession and by electing to corporate boards members and/or representatives who support public education. The Association further believes that the boards of trustees of public employee retirement systems should coordinate their voting in companies in which they have a mutual interest.

The Association believes that the assets of retirement systems in which public education employees participate should be managed and invested for the sole and exclusive benefit of the participants and beneficiaries of those systems. Expenditures from a system trust fund should only be made for the benefit of trust beneficiaries and for the reasonable expenses of administering the system. All retirement benefits earned by education employees should, under the law, be payable to such employees. Existing retirement benefits should be maintained or improved. No person participating in a retirement system should be required to accept any reduction in benefits below those in force at any time during the period of membership. The retirement benefits are earned, and therefore, inviolate.

The Association is aware of incursions on retirement system assets by state and municipal governments. Such incursions involve either a misuse of assets or the failure to appropriate required funds to the system. Both practices result in increasing accrued liabilities, which reduce the financial soundness of the system and jeopardize the security of education employee retirement benefits. These incursions on retirement systems can best be prevented by the passage of federal and/or state legislation.

The Association also believes that a retirement system should be exempt from federal regulations when its plan is in compliance with minimal standards prescribed by federal, state, and local statutes. (1976, 2000)

G. Secure Professional Autonomy

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, CERTIFICATION, AND LICENSURE

G-1. State Professional Standards Boards

The National Education Association believes that the profession must govern itself. The Association also believes that each state should have a professional standards board, composed of a majority of practicing public school teachers.

Professional standards boards should have exclusive authority to license and to determine criteria for how a national certificate will be recognized for professional educators. Further, these boards should have the exclusive authority to establish the standards regarding licensure, including procedures for suspension and revocation. The Association opposes legislation that compromises the authority of state standards boards and urges the elimination of state statutes that conflict with this authority. The Association further believes that these boards must apply National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards as a minimum for granting, denying, or withdrawing the approval of teacher preparation programs. (1969, 2000)

ACCREDITATION

G-5. Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must be approved at two levels: at the state level through an agency such as a professional standards board and at the national level through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The Association also believes that NCATE and its governing boards must include representatives of all levels of the teaching profession as well as students preparing to teach. (1969, 2000)

Death to Busy Work

Our educational system is firmly rooted in homework, but what if homework is actually doing more harm than good?

THE END OF HOMEWORK How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning
By **Etta Kralovec and John Buell**, $20, Beacon Press, 128 pages, www.beacon.org

In this brief but fresh look at the practice of homework, educators Etta Kralovec and John Buell make a compelling argument against this age-old practice, offering evidence that homework does little to boost academic achievement or even personal responsibility—and much to widen the educational gap between the nation's "haves" and "have-nots."

Homework, Kralovec and Buell argue, forces parents to don the role of teacher, a task many parents are simply ill-equipped, or too exhausted at the end of the day, to take on.

The result? Homework, the authors contend, often sets parent against child and cuts into quality family time, which is already in short supply in two-income homes.

What's arresting about this well-written, well-documented book is that, perhaps for the first time, the practice of homework is linked to school reform, with its merits and demerits debated both historically and educationally.

Buell and Kralovec explain how the practice of homework has been integrally tied to America's national economic priorities. But the authors say politicians and other policy makers have missed the mark, focusing on getting students to do more homework instead of helping to improve public schooling.

Abolishing homework, Buell and Kralovec are quick to note, would be no easy task. Homework is deeply entrenched in both school systems and social values.

Class instruction, for instance, is typically structured around homework, a practice that ensures completion of the curriculum without extending school hours.

Teachers, the authors note, have plenty of reasons to embrace the homework ethic—they had to endure homework themselves and, these days especially, they're often pressured to show their support of high academic standards by assigning heavy amounts of homework.

But many educators are starting to question the practice. Few inner-city children, these critics point out, have quiet, well-lit places to study or well-educated parents to help them with their homework.

Many of these students return home after school to challenging environments where they have to cook dinner, care for younger siblings, or rush off to work.

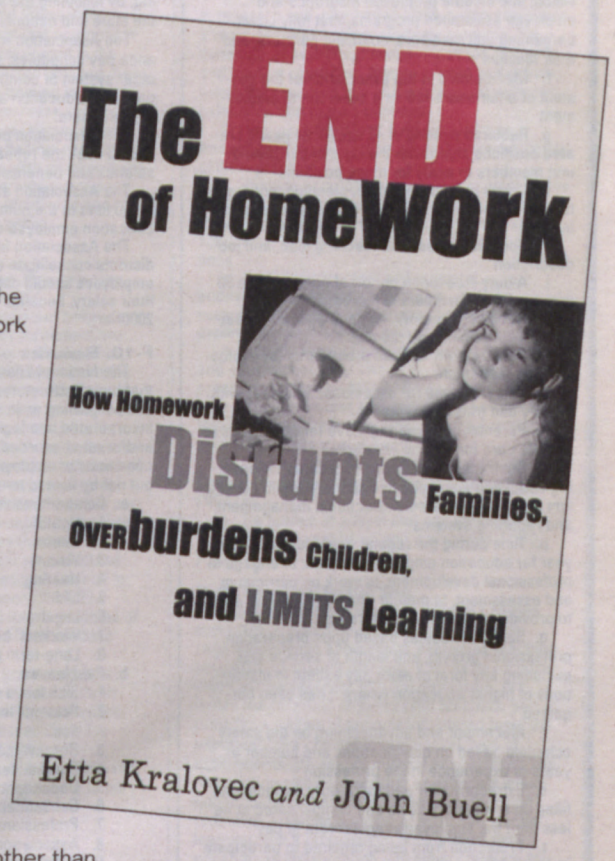
Homework just doesn't fit into the schedules of these youngsters, and they pay the consequences. To teachers who don't understand their special challenges, the failure to do homework comes across as a character flaw—and perpetuates social inequity.

Peppered with anecdotes of students compelled to forego school activities and outside interests to do homework, *The End of Homework* questions America's ability to raise whole children when homework assignments leave little time to do anything other than school work.

The authors even suggest that homework pressure may be damaging children's emotional well-being. They point to psychologists who assert that "the adolescent's first priority is developing a social self," a difficult process in a world squeezed by voluminous homework.

Ending homework, Buell and Kralovec argue, would foster the emotional development of students, preserve family time, and give teaching back to teachers without overburdening them with having to give and grade "meaningless homework."

Just how realistic is that claim. To judge for yourself, you'll have to, well, do your homework and read this most provocative book.


The END of HomeWork
How Homework Disrupts Families, overburdens Children, and LIMITS Learning
Etta Kralovec and John Buell

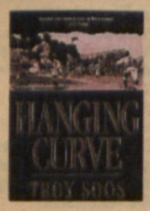
EXCERPT

"We believe that reform in homework practices is central to a politics of family and personal liberation. Taking back our home lives will allow us to begin enriching our community life.
"Drawing a clearer line between the school and the home may enable families to reconstitute themselves as families, and help parents pass on to their children something other than the exhaustion of endless work."

BOOKS by NEA Members

E-Mail Essentials:
A Basic Guide to E-mail Style ($9.95), *How To Search the Web* ($12.95), and *Getting the Young Child Started on the Web* ($12.95), (Best of the Web Series)
Edited By Robert Want
These guides help students and educators who want to increase their online efficiency. Plus $4.50 s&h from Want Publishing Co., 420 Lexington, New York, NY 10170. 212/687-3774. Fax to 212/687-3779. Also shown on the Web at www.wantpublishing.com.

It Sure Beats Working For A Living (Just Kidding)
By George Petersen
A California school teacher, Petersen shares three decades of teaching experience in this nuts-and-bolts guide for beginning educators. This handy resource is available for $13, plus $3 s&h, from Kargeo Press, 1221 Clarke Lane, Alameda, CA 94502. Call 510/865-5753. Or you can reach the publisher for more information through E-mail at Kargeo@pacbell.net.



Hanging Curve
By Troy Soos
The *Hanging Curve* is the latest book in the Mickey Rawlings Mystery series. Evoking the spirit and strife of America in the 1920s, the book follows Mickey on a journey during a crucial time in our nation's history. $22, plus $2.50 s&h, from Kensington Publishing Corp., Dept. CO, 850 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022. Call 1-888/345-2665 or check the Web at www.kensingtonbooks.com.

Farm Pizza, Hide and Seek, and Farm Smiles
By Darleen L. Hunt
Each day, the animals at Reading Rock Farm discover a new book and have zany adventures. Written by a Michigan kindergarten and reading teacher, this series works to build reading confidence through colorful pictures and imaginative activity ideas. $4, plus $1.50 s&h, from Reading Rock Books, PO Box 67, Athens, Michigan 49011. 616/729-4578. On the Web at www.readingrockbooks.com.

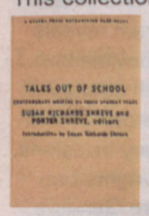
FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Middle School Survival

Too Old for This, Too Young for That is for students entering the exciting and confusing middle school. Organized around seven survival tips, the guide covers topics ranging from getting braces to dealing with puppy love. With illustrations, activity pages, and suggested Web resources. $14.95, plus $4.95 s&h, from Free Spirit Publishing, 400 First Ave. North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401. Call 800/735-7323. Fax 612/337-5050. On the Web at www.freespirit.com.

Tales Out of School

This collection of original essays testifies to the agony of being young and misunderstood in the American classroom. *Tales Out of School: Contemporary Writers on Their Student Years* offers alternately poignant and amusing views on the experience of being "different." These personal tales from writers such as Sherman Alexie, Carolyn Ferrell, and Bich Minh Nguyen will engage teachers, parents, and students alike. $23 plus $5 s&h, from Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA. 02108. Call 800/225-3362. Fax 800/634-7568. Or check www.beacon.org.



Great American Storyteller

Washington Irving's fantastic tales have captured the imaginations of

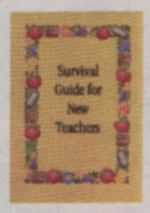
Americans for over two centuries. Now the story of his adventurous life is accessible to younger readers through *Washington Irving: Storyteller for a New Nation*. The book includes photographs, a list of Irving's major works, a timeline, a bibliography, and source notes. $19.95, plus $3 s&h, from Morgan Reynolds, Inc. 620 Elm St., Suite 384, Greensboro, NC 27406. 800/535-1504.

Reading and Writing in Balance

How to Teach Balanced Reading and Writing is well-organized and presents research-based practices for teaching reading and writing to students of all ages. Offering a combination of methodologies to reach pupils of various backgrounds, the book includes a chapter on student evaluation. $29.95 plus $6 s&h from Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc. 2626 S. Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005. 800/348-4474 Fax 847/290-6609. On the Web at www.skylightedu.com.

Surviving the First-Year

Facing a classroom full of energetic students can be a daunting challenge, especially for first-year teachers. But the *Survival Guide for New Teachers* can help! Published by

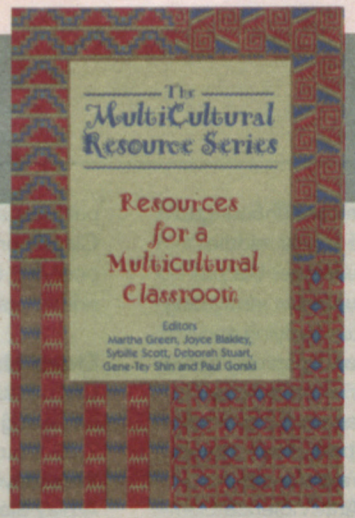


The Department of Education, this handy booklet discusses how new teachers can work effectively with mentors, parents, principals, and teacher educators. Booklet includes more than a dozen helpful Internet sites. To order a free copy, call 877/4-ED-PUBS or check online at www.ed.gov/pubs/ index.html.

Snuff it Out

R&B sensation BoyzIIMen can help

encourage your students to stay smoke free. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is offering free "smoke-free" posters featuring BoyzIIMen. Order a maximum of 10 posters by calling 770/488-5705 or E-mailing tobaccoinfo@cdc.gov. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/tobacco/smokefreeposter.htm.



NEW from the NEA Professional Library

The Multicultural Resource Series: Resources for a Multicultural Classroom
Martha Green, Joyce Blakley, Sybille Scott, Deborah Stuart, Gene-Tey Shin, and Paul Gorski, Editors
296 pp., $18.95, #2012-X-00-F

EXCERPT

Appreciating the uniqueness in individuals, as well as their contributions, is the challenge that our schools, institutions, and corporations face today. Research has shown that people tend to be more productive when they feel appreciated and respected. To foster this respect for differences, people need to learn about each other's culture, history, and background.

***Resources for a Multicultural Classroom* is intended to be a representative listing of the multicultural resources available today; more new resources are being generated daily. Whatever the material, however, the goal remains the same: to help all children learn.**

If you're ready to make celebrating diversity more than Taco Tuesdays, open this book of great ideas. This second volume in the Multicultural Resource Series offers annotated print, film, video, and electronic resource lists that can help you plan K-12 programs that tie the strengths of diversity and inclusion with your prescribed curriculum.

You'll also find info here on organizations that help you build multicultural information into effective educational programs.

The resources are divided into eight categories:

- **American Indian and Alaska Native**
- **Asian and Pacific Islander**
- **Black**
- **Hispanic**
- **Multiracial/Interracial**
- **Gender**
- **Disability**
- **Sexual Orientation**

For more information, call 800-229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

You Can Teach Someone To Read

By Lorraine Peoples Looking for a book with fun and easy-to-follow lesson plans to aid in teaching reading? This reading and phonics guide is an ideal resource for at-home use by parents. $22.95, plus $4.50 s&h, from GloBooks Publishing, 7760 E St. Rte. 69, C-5, Prescott Valley, AZ 86314. Call 800/804-6260. Fax 888/847-2412. On the Web at www.publishersbookstore/globookspub.

TVTIPS

The City (La Ciudad)

PBS, Friday, September 22, 9:00-10:30 p.m. ET. Check local listings.

Filmmaker David Riker cast non-actors in "The City," using each person's own true story in this film about New York's Latin American immigrants. This film combines four stories: a day laborer competition; a homeless puppeteer's dream of a better life for his daughter; a young man meeting a girl from his home village; and a textile worker struggling to gain her overdue wages to help her ailing daughter. ✔

TV TIPS

Generation Hope: Blueprint for Change
WAM! America's Kidz Network, Friday, September 8, 2-3 p.m. This hour-long special grew from an anti-violence campaign Colorado students helped design after the Columbine shootings. Developed for a middle school audience, the program focuses on motivating kids to stop bullying and violence and inspiring behavior that promotes respect and tolerance. *Blueprint for Change*, presented as part of WAM!'s Voices for Change Anti-Violence Campaign, is a Cable in the Classroom program with one-year taping rights for educators.

Dora the Explorer
CBS, Saturdays, beginning September 16, 7:30-8 a.m. Nickelodeon, Weekdays, 11-11:30 a.m. A play-along, animated

adventure series starring a 7-year-old Latina heroine who lives in a computer. Dora is bilingual, and in every episode she teaches a Spanish word or phrase and involves the audience in thinking through a puzzle or problem. A bilingual Web site is at www.nickjr.com.

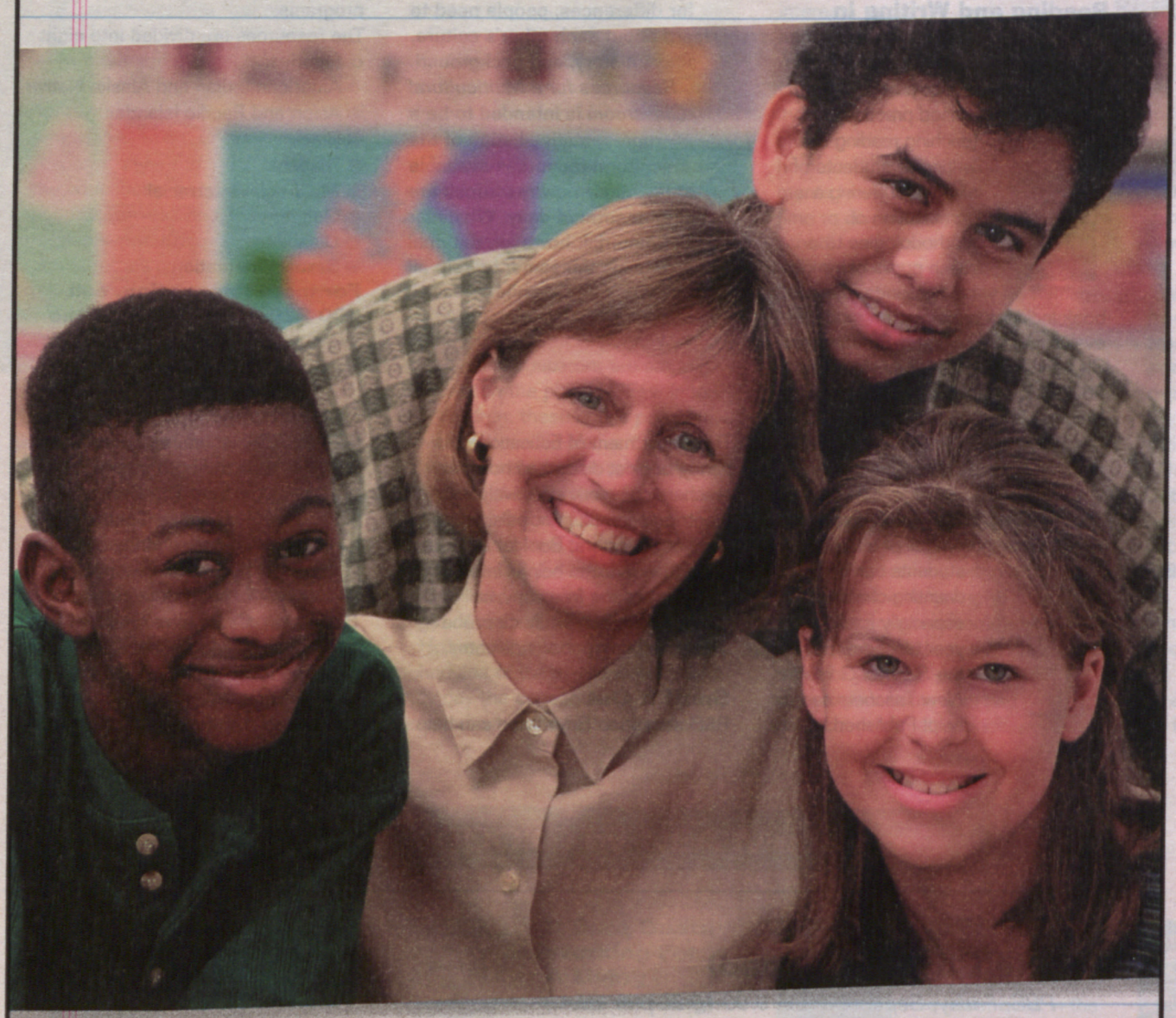
A Force More Powerful
PBS, Monday, September 18 and 25, 9-10:30 p.m. ET. Check local listings.

This new documentary explores the potential of nonviolent protest as a means of opposition. Using archival footage and interviews, the program reveals how strategic nonviolent action in the 20th century overturned dictators, obstructed military invasions, and won human rights battles. Featured are Gandhi's confrontation with the British, the Danish resistance to Nazi occupation, apartheid in South Africa, and desegregation in America's South. The companion Web site includes lesson plans built around major themes of the program. A 16-page study guide for high school educators is available from WETA-TV by contacting kzill@weta.com or calling 703/998-2459.

Just Deal
NBC, Saturdays, beginning September 23, 11:30 a.m-12:00 p.m. Set in the Pacific Northwest,

Just Deal follows two teenagers from different backgrounds as their lives change and evolve over time. This year, Dylan and Ash and their friend Jermaine make the important transition from the top rung of the middle school hierarchy to the bottom rung of high school, facing the academic and social challenges of their new environment.

Have More Time To Smile.



What would you do with a little extra time? Education World saves you time by providing easy-to-use information and research, thousands of original lesson plans, and access to a world of resources and related businesses. We help you find what you need, when you need it. So while we're busy doing the legwork, you'll have more time to do what really matters. Which is exactly what Education World is all about. Giving educators something you can use: Time. www.EducationWorld.com/go/nea

Education WORLD®
It's About Time.

The Royal Diaries
HBO, September 2000, check local listings. A new series inspired by young women leaders in history. Each show focuses on a turning point in the woman's life. The first episode to be aired in this series is *Cleopatra: Daughter of the Nile.*

Parklife: Africa
Animal Planet, Thursdays, beginning September 28, 10:30-11 p.m. Filmed on location in South Africa, this program follows game wardens as they work to protect some of the world's most endangered species from natural disasters, poachers, and errant tourists.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Lead the Way
The Leader's Guide, Student Handbook, and *Assignment Sheets* make up *The Grandfriends Project* series. Martin Kimeldorf's material prepares students for their first visit to a care facility and guides them in the unfolding friendship. The stories, exercises, and questions cover topics on age awareness, age-based stereotypes, physical and sensory changes, stages of aging, and listening and interviewing techniques. $10 for the *Leader's Guide,* $5 for the *Student Handbook,* and $10 for Reproducible Assignment Sheets, plus $3.50 s&h from Fairview Press, 2450 Riverside Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55454. 800/544-80566. Fax 612/363-9730.

Making the Connection
The exploration of family history developed in *History Comes Home, Family Stories Across the Curriculum* provides a powerful vehicle for helping students make meaningful connections between history and their own lives. This book helps educators expand the widely used "family tree" assignment to strengthen student skills in writing, research, and thinking. $17.50 plus $3.50 s&h from Stenhouse Publishers P.O. Box 360, York, ME 03909. 888/363-0566. Fax 207/363-9730. On the Web at www.stenhouse.com.

Earth Savers
The third volume in the World Leaders Series, *Biography Today, Environmental Leaders 2* will appeal to young readers eager to explore the lives of leaders who have helped shape today's environment.

$38, plus $4 s&h, from Omnigraphics 615 Griswold Street, Detroit, MI 48226. 800/234-1340. Fax 800/875-1340. On the Web at www.omnigraphics.com.

Magical Treats
KidSource: Magic Tricks is a kid-friendly (ages 8-12) reference guide to the world of magic that focuses on how to perform magic tricks. *KidSource* also includes problem-solving tips as well as suggestions for kids on how to create original props and costumes. $9.95, plus

$5 s&h from NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712. 800/323-4900. Fax 800/998-3103. On the Web at www.lowellh.com.

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If teamwork can build a better cupholder, imagine what it can do for a ten-year-old kid.

At Saturn, we know firsthand that a strong partnership between union and management can make a difference. Which is why we created the Partnership Award, to recognize those who have set out to change the impossible. Congratulations to this year's winners. By working together, you've made your schools a better place to teach. Not to mention, a better place to learn.

Chicopee Public Schools & Teachers Association • Genesee Intermediate School District, Education Association & Educational Support Personnel • Milford School District & Education Association • Paradise Valley Unified School District & Education Association Riverview Gardens Schools & National Education Association • Thompson School District & Education Association

For more information and to learn how to apply for the Partnership Award, call 1-800-738-1817 or visit our Web site at www.saturn.com.

SATURN

DIVERSITY Calendar

October

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
The idea of recognizing the importance of employing disabled persons has existed since 1945. The monthly observance was established by Presidential proclamation in 1998.

Diwali, October 26
Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is one of the most important Hindu festivals of the year and marks the beginning of the Hindu new year. Long ago, this festival represented the commencement of the commercial year and was a time for the spirits of the dead to revisit the homes of the living.

November

National American Indian Heritage Month
National American Indian Heritage Month celebrates the history and contributions of Native Americans. Several national organizations have been formed over the years to address American Indian and Alaska Native issues. The National Indian Education Association, founded in 1969, is the largest and oldest Indian education organization in the country.

Ramadan, November 27
Ramadan, the ninth and holiest month of the Islamic year, traditionally begins with the sighting of the new moon. This time of spiritual and physical purification commemorates the revelation of the Quran to Muhammad on Lailat Ul-Qadr. Fasting during this month is one of the five fundamental religious duties of Islam. The fast ends when the new moon is again sighted.

December

World AIDS Day, December 1
World AIDS Day is a day designated by the United Nations and the World Health Organization to increase awareness and education about AIDS.

Emperor's Birthday, December 23
Emperor's Birthday is a Japanese national holiday that serves as a day of rest and an opportunity for people to be received by the Emperor in Tokyo.

On Stage

From Annie to the Wizard of Oz, *Show Time! Music, Dance, and Drama Activities for Kids* introduces kids to the world of music, dance, and drama. This collection offers more than

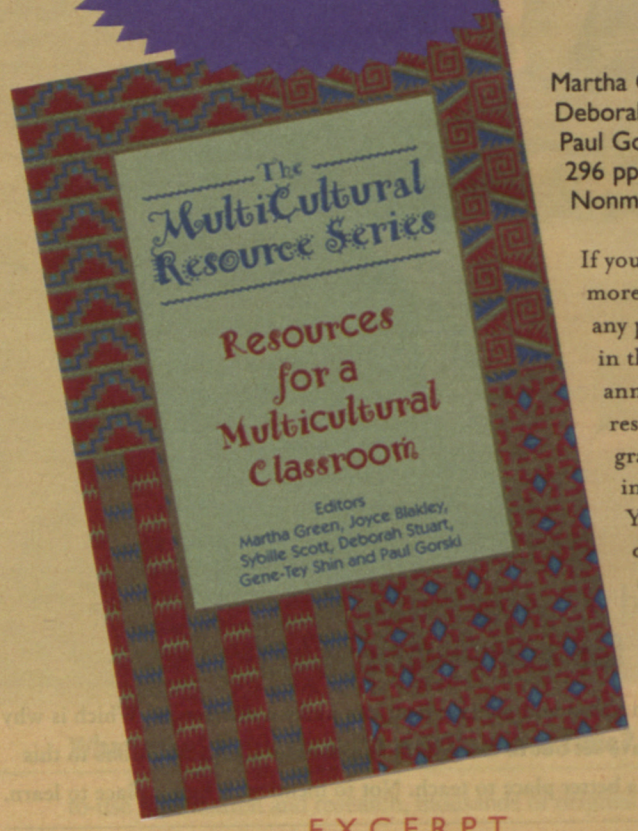
80 activities and ready-to-use monologues, scenes, and short plays that help young performers develop their skills as singers, dancers, and actors. $14.95, plus $5 s&h, from Independent Publishers Group, 814 N. Franklin St., Chicago, IL 60610. 312/337-0747. Fax 312-337-5985. On the Web at www.ipgbook.com.

Antarctica Curriculum

Want to take your class on a trek across Antarctica without ever leaving your classroom? The National Center for Health Education offers free curriculum to educators interested in tracking the progress of former teachers Ann Bancroft and Liv Arnesen on their historic 2,400-mile journey across Antarctica.

Bancroft is a former NEA member, and both women are committed to inspiring children to go after their dreams. The curriculum provided is customized by grade level and comes with a colorful wall map of Antarctica. Additionally, the informative expedition Web site provides educational activities, daily journals, video and audio updates, and an electronic newsletter. For more details, visit www.your expedition.com.

NEW! from the NEA Professional Library


The MultiCultural Resource Series
Resources for a Multicultural Classroom
Editors
Martha Green, Joyce Blakley, Sybille Scott, Deborah Stuart, Gene-Tey Shin and Paul Gorski

The Multicultural Resource Series:
Resources for a Multicultural Classroom

Martha Green, Joyce Blakley, Sybille Scott, Deborah Stuart, Gene-Tey Shin, and Paul Gorski, Editors
296 pp., $18.95, #2012-X-00-D
Nonmembers $21.95 NEA Members $18.95

If you're ready to make celebrating diversity more than Taco Tuesdays, open this book to any page for great ideas. This second volume in the Multicultural Resource Series offers annotated print, film, video, and electronic resource lists to help you plan K-12 programs that tie the strengths of diversity and inclusion with your prescribed curriculum. You'll also find the names and addresses of organizations and agencies that help you successfully build multicultural information and viewpoints into ongoing programs. For ease of selection the resources are divided into eight categories:

- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian and Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic
- Multiracial/Interracial
- Gender
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation

For more information or to order, call 800-229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

EXCERPT

Appreciating the uniqueness in individuals, as well as the contributions they have to offer, is the challenge that our schools, institutions, and corporations face today. Research has shown that people tend to be more productive when they perceive themselves to be appreciated and respected. To foster appreciation and respect for the differences in individuals, people need to learn about each other's culture, history, and background as early as possible. That's where the NEA's Multicultural Resource Series comes in. *Resources for a Multicultural Classroom* is intended to be a representative—rather than comprehensive—listing of the multicultural resources available today. It would be impossible to list everything currently available or the new resources being generated daily. Whatever the material, however, the goal remains the same: to help children.

Free CD-Rom Gradebook

Want help tracking grades, keeping up with student info, maintaining your schedule, and publishing to the Web? ThinkWave is giving away its popular software, ThinkWave Educator, to teachers across the country—all you have to do is ask. No sign up or registration fees. Grades, attendance, and lessons become easy by downloading the program or by simply requesting the free CD-ROM at the www.thinkwave.com Web site or by sending a self-addressed 9x12 envelope, with $1.21 postage, to ThinkWave at 80 West Bowery Street, Suite 305, Akron, OH, 44308.

Upfront News

Your teenage students can become savvy consumers of news and trends with the *New York Times Upfront*, a bi-monthly teen magazine that aims to cover everything from space ships to rock stars. A single subscription of 18 issues costs $14.95. Classes of 10 or more can subscribe at a cost of $7.95 per student. A single subscription, plus teacher's edition, costs $24.95. In addition, a 6 percent s&h fee will be added to all orders. To place an order, call 1/800-544-2917.

Fun After Class

From classic games to zany new crafts, *60 Super Simple After-School Activities* will provide hours of entertainment for young minds. This book includes ideas for scrapbooks and puzzles, simple recipes, as well as individual and group games. $6.95 from Lowell House. Call 800/679-5500.

WEB WINNERS

Faces of Hope

www.facesofhope.org
Faces of Hope is a nationally recognized breast cancer awareness group. This Web site offers general health care information as well as materials for educational purposes. Exhibits for conference-style display can be purchased for $750 and include biographies of breast cancer survivors as well as brochures to hand out. Thirty-second commercials are available for $400 each. These prices are for non-profits and include s&h.

African Voices

www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices
Those who can't visit the National Museum of Natural History can learn about Africa past and present in the Smithsonian Institute's

African Voices Web site. This interactive site is visually engaging and textually informative, complete with a bibliography of books, CDs, and audiocassettes for those who want to explore further.

Georgia Revealed

www.oneworldjourneys.com
This informative site, about the former Soviet republic, includes information about Georgia's history, culture, language, natural resources, and current politics. Those interested can sign up for E-

mail updates about the site, or even gather information for a tour of the country.

Tate Modern

www.tate.org.uk/modern
A branch of Britain's famous Tate Museums, Tate Modern houses the works of Dali, Picasso, Matisse, Rothko, and the like. This Web site, part of the larger site for all the Tate museums, will walk you through exhibits and provide the artists' biographical information.

Cool School of the Year

Education World and Cisco Systems are honoring innovative, student-run Web sites across the nation by sponsoring the Cool School of the Year contest. The 1999 award recipient, Kenston High School of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, will receive $10,000 in networking equipment. Think your school Web site has what it takes to win this year's competition? Get details at www.education-world.com.

Ageless Aardvarks

Active seniors over 50 are the fastest-growing population in the U.S. today, and the Aardvark Express Web site is designed especially for them. This lively, personable site is run by a retired teacher and provides links to products, articles, and Web pages of special interest to dynamic seniors, from technology to travel and entertainment. Interested aardvarks can dig around at www.aardvarkexpress.com.

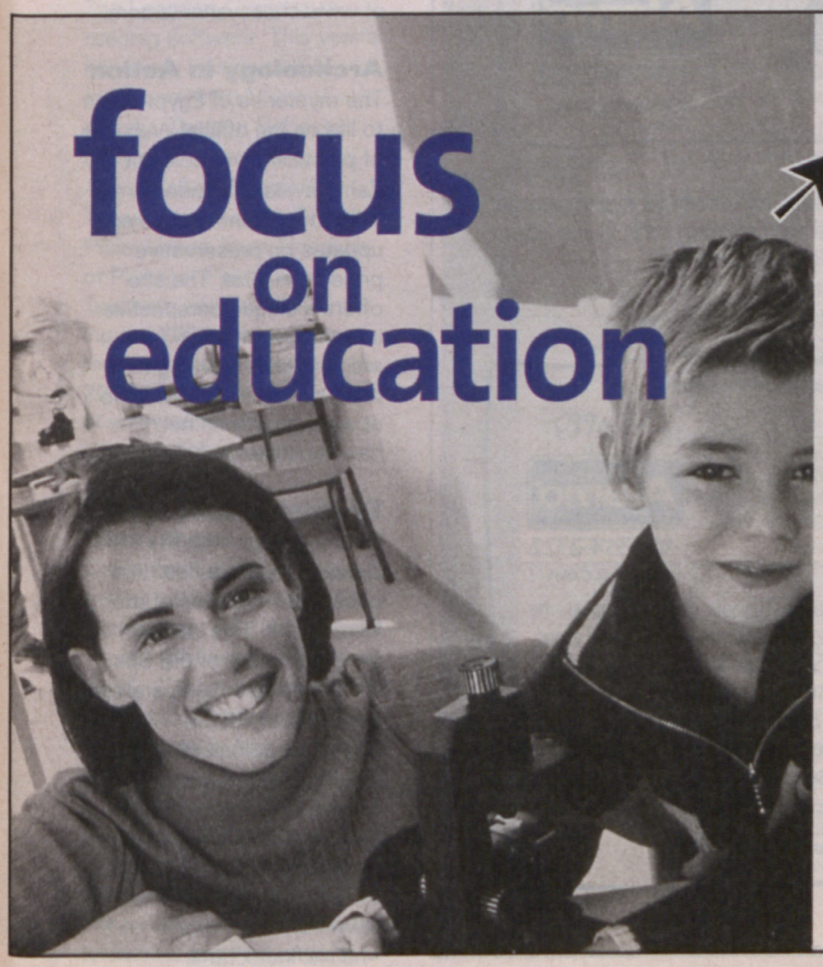
Classroom Community Online

Technology and education come together on the FreeZone Network, a colorful and engaging site designed for

kids ages 8 to 14. On the FreeZone site, children can safely connect with other children, teachers can download lesson plans that engage learning on the Internet, and parents can share opinions, ideas, and insights. Visit at www.freezone.com.

The Penguin Page

Have you ever stopped to wonder if penguins have knees? Or why their feet don't freeze when they leave the water? Then visit the Penguin Page for one-click access to information on penguin natural evolution, ethology, biology correlates, news, and more. Replete with photos and scientific diagrams, the Penguin Page is educational and colorfully detailed. On the Web at www.homeworkcentral.com/knowledge/vsl_files.htp?fileid=9767&flt=CAB.



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America Singing

Before radio, America's most popular tunes spread across the country on printed song sheets. The sheets offer a glimpse into the political, social, and economic circumstances of the 19th century, particularly the Civil War era. The Library of Congress posts an online collection of song sheets, providing historical notes and lyrics. On the Web at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amsshtml/amsshome.html.

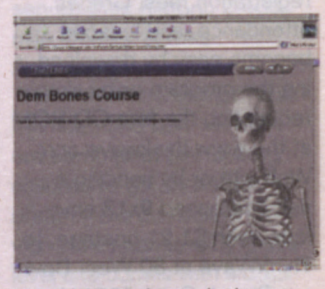
Kids and Cancer

Over 60 percent of cancers are related to lifestyle habits formed in early life. To

increase the awareness of the health risk posed by excessive sun exposure, smoking, and poor diet, the American Cancer Society has launched Y2Kidz.org, a Web site designed for kids by kids. This easy-to-navigate site offers children a forum to discuss concerns about cancer, while encouraging kids to take charge of their own lives and make healthy decisions. Collaboration with Free Zone.com assures parents that content is kid-friendly and safe to use. To learn more, visit: www.y2kidz.org.

Dem Bones

An elementary introduction to osteology, this site lets students follow Osteo the animated tour guide as he



leads them through the human skeletal system. Skeletal functions, divisions, and classifications are explained, and a course review quiz and summary are given. On the Web at www.allencomm.com/software/netsyn/demos/bones/index.html.

Chess Variants

The game we know today as "chess" is merely one of many variants played for over 15 centuries around the globe. This Web site provides extensive information on modern versions of the game, including the rules of Japan's "Shogi" and China's "Xianggqi." Links to online chess games and related sites are given. On the Web at www.chessvariants.com.

Archeology in Action

The mysteries of Egypt come to life on the official Web site of practicing archeologist Dr. Zahi Hawass. Included are links to relevant articles and updates on preservative projects in Giza. The site offers a unique perspective into the pyramids and the archeologists working to maintain them. On the Web at www.guardians.net/hawass/index.htm.

Spanish Galleons

Take a voyage with the Spanish treasure fleet that once ruled the seas of the New World. This site presents the story of the Spanish Galleons, which parallels the discovery of the Americas, colonization, and the decline of the Spanish Empire. The pages furnish details on ship life, pirates, and the specifics of firing a cannon. On the Web at www.northlink.com/~hauxe/index.html.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

World Teacher's Day Commemoration

Education International (EI) links more than 20 million educators who are members of educator unions worldwide, including NEA's 2.5 million members. EI recently announced a new section on its Web site in support of the ongoing campaign for the issuing of World Teacher's Day commemorative stamps. Schoolmaster Sir Rowland Hill first invented the postage stamp in 1840. Philately and education have been linked ever since, allowing people of all ages to explore the social, cultural, artistic, and historical heritages of many countries. View the 14 new stamps honoring teachers at www.eiie.org/phila.htm.

Reading/Technology Award

The International Reading Association is teaming with The Learning Company to award the IRA Reading and Technology Award for the successful integration of technology with reading instruction. Prizes include a multimedia laptop, $1,000 in reading software, and an invitation to the next IRA convention. Regional winners receive a $500 package of The Learning Company's reading software. This year's honorees included NEA members Kristi Miller of Albany, Oregon; Rebecca Kelly of Dolmar, Delaware; Anne Wall of Clarksville, Tennessee; and the Grand Prize winner, Irene Huschak of Portage, Pennsylvania. Teachers interested in entering the 2001 competition must apply by November 15, 2000. Details available online at www.learningcompanyschool.com.

Computers for the Classroom

Computer age technology is getting a boost from the Intel Corporation. Intel has teamed up with IBM and Toshiba to supply 200 computers and Internet connections to master teachers in Arizona, California, Oregon, and Texas.

In addition to the hardware, the companies will also provide training classes to 60 teachers in their districts. For more information refer to www.intel.com/education.

Hands-on Science

Want to actively involve your 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in creative problem solving? The Bayer Corporation has joined with the National Science Foundation, the Christopher Columbus Foundation, and *Discovery Magazine* to present the Bayer/NSF Award for Community Service, rewarding the use of science and technology to tackle community issues. Want to get your kids involved? The deadline for next year's entries is January 31. Information and entry forms are posted online at www.bayernsfaward.com.

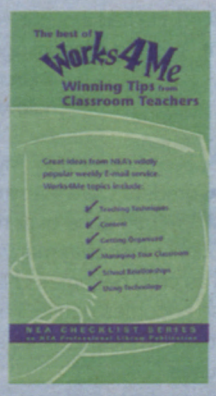
The Great American Smokeout

Peer pressure can be a positive thing—when applied to keeping kids from smoking. The American Cancer Society is hosting the 24th annual Great American Smokeout November 16, to encourage smokers to quit not only for the day, but for life. The nationally recognized event will be celebrated with new activities on Y2Kidz.org, the colorful, interactive Web site launched to educate children and teens on issues surrounding smoking and cancer. For more information, visit www.cancer.org or www.y2kidz.org.

Are you ready?

For the start of another new school year, that is. Are you wondering how to make the same old subjects new and exciting to your students—and yourself? Or are you grappling with issues like discipline and parental involvement?

Whether you're a seasoned veteran or brand new to the classroom, every teacher can use practical, tried-and-true classroom tips that work. The NEA Professional Library has three new books available this fall to help you get off to the right start.



The Best of Works4Me is the latest addition to the NEA Professional Library's Checklist series. This collection of the best ideas from NEA's popular Works4Me weekly tips E-newsletter is written by the experts—classroom teachers. With more than 85 practical tips on everything from teaching techniques to relationships, you'll find great ideas you can use everyday!

Item #2161-4-00-D
Regular nonmember price: **$5.95**
NEA Members: **$4.50**

You asked for help, and now you have it. *The New IDEA Survival Guide* is here to help you navigate the new Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). The easy question-and-answer format leads you through a number of IDEA-related scenarios that you may face in your day-to-day interactions with students and parents. You'll find practical advice on dealing with discipline, developing Individualized Education Plans, and much more.

Item #2016-2-00-D
Regular nonmember price: **$6.95**
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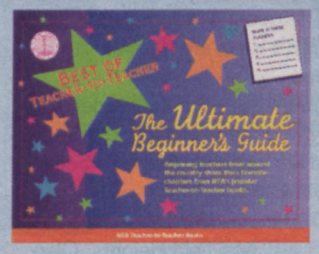

Beginning teachers from around the country have identified their favorite chapters from NEA's Teacher-to-Teacher books. Now you can have their favorites right at your fingertips with the new *Best of Teacher-to-Teacher: The Ultimate Beginner's Guide.* You'll find eight full chapters covering topics that range from multiple intelligences to teaching with technology. Each chapter is introduced by a beginning teacher who explains how to make the most out of what the chapter has to offer. This is a must have for every new teacher's library!

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Shipping and handling will be added to all orders.

in the Light Lane

Not Quite Right

For weeks, we had read the book and watched stellar cinematic performances by Brock Peters and Gregory Peck. We discussed, acted out short parts, and wrote about the story. I was thrilled at how much my students loved one of my favorite literary works.

Then the papers were collected and the class left. As I thumbed through the stack of papers, my feathers fell. There before my widened eyes was the following title: "How To Kill a Mockingbird."

Anne Marie Duncan
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

While grading one of my quarterly reading theme tests, I stumbled across an unexpected answer.

The question dealt with a short story about a human family that feeds a deer family during the cold winter months. The question prompted, "Tell how children's beds are different from fawns' beds."

One of my second grade students wrote, "Fawns' beds are made from sticks and leaves, and children's beds are made in China."

Michael J. Kuenzel
Mayfield Heights, Ohio

One of my kindergarten children has been in foster care for quite some time. She announced that she was going to be adopted. One of her classmates asked what "adopted" means.

Her reply: "Let me tell you about it. A judge sits at this great big high desk. He asks the people that want to adopt you, 'Do you want this kid?' The people say, 'Yes, we do!' The judge says, 'Is that your *final answer*?' Then you are adopted!"

Devon Hamner
Grand Island, Nebraska

As a teacher, you never know where your influence begins and ends. Teaching for 33 years, I have had many joyous and stressful times—and now have a lot of gray and silver hair crowning my head.

One little girl with a beautician for a mother told me she was going to get a new haircut. Later I found out she had told her mom she wanted her hair short like Mrs. Plager's silver! There's not enough money in the world to buy a tribute like that.

Carla Plager
Auburn, Nebraska

One morning, one of my fourth graders seemed to be consistently ignoring my directions. Exasperated, I asked him to look at Rule #1, posted in our classroom. The rule says: "Follow directions the first time."

I asked him to read it out loud three times. He read it out loud. Four times.

Stephen Campbell
Little Falls, New Jersey

My third grade class had been studying Washington, D.C., citizenship, and government.

One period, we were reviewing some of the things we had been learning. I asked the question, "Who would be next in line if something happened to both the President and the Vice President?" When I called on one of my students whose hand was enthusiastically waving, he answered confidently, "the talker of the house."

Susan DeVos
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

A couple of years ago, I was teaching a class of kindergartners a math lesson. One of the more outgoing students, Erin, shouted out what I was about to say next.

"Oh my goodness, Erin!" I said. "You just read my mind!"

Beaming, she replied, "And I don't even know how to read yet!"

Leah Benis
Winooski, Vermont

One of my ninth grade students brought me his weekly report to sign. I put down that he had an 83 percent and was doing fine and signed my initials, MEA.

The student picked up his report and looked it over. With a puzzled face, he asked me what he was missing. I checked and told him he had all the assignments in, and I asked why he thought he was missing any.

That's because, he explained, I kept putting "MEA" on his reports. I told him that those were just my initials. He chuckled. He had thought my initials meant "missing every assignment."

Marcia Alexander
Englewood, Florida

Several years ago, my third graders were learning plurals. We had gone over the rules thoroughly, including many examples such as child becomes children and goose becomes geese. I emphasized that there's no such word as "mouses."

The students had completed several practices quite well, so I felt confident they would excel on the final test. I have never forgotten one answer on that test. George wrote that the plural of mouse is rats!

Lillian C. Biddulph
Orem, Utah

The New Freedom

After studying the Statue of Liberty as part of our unit on immigration, I read my fourth grade students Emma Lazarus's famous poem, "The New Colossus."

We then discussed the poem's meaning at great length. As a culminating activity, I assigned my students to make up a new title for the poem based on what they had learned.

One of my students, obviously greatly influenced by today's computer age, submitted, "Welcome! You've got freedom!"

Claire Heifech
North Brunswick, New Jersey

For my second grade class, I wrote several compound words on the board and some words that were just two syllables. We had spent some time distinguishing the difference between the two.

Then I told the students to look at the word "compound." Was this a compound word? Several hands went up. The student I called on assured me that "compound" was indeed a compound word. I asked him what were the two smaller words in "compound."

"Com and pound," he replied.

I promptly asked this student how he would use "com" in a sentence.

"You, know," he said confidently, "dot com."

April Wilsey
Mission Viejo, California

"Remember field trips before the budget cuts?"

Got Laughs?

- Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share with other NEA members? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202/822-7206. Send E-mail to neatoday@nea.org.
- Want a classroom chuckle delivered to your E-mail box once a week? Subscribe to the new "In the Light Lane" mailing list. Just send an E-mail to **join-lightlane@list.nea.org** (no subject or message needed).

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www.womensorganizations.org

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Social Security Number	Date of Birth	
Mother's Maiden Name (For identification only)		

About your finances

Employer	Position
Years There	Annual Salary $
Other Income§ $	Source

§Alimony, child support, or separate maintenance income need not be revealed if you do not wish it considered as a basis for repayment.

Residence: ❑ Own ❑ Buying ❑ Rent ❑ Other

Monthly Payment $

Request for additional card

Name of Authorized User	Relationship

*I have read this application and everything I have stated in it is true. My signature means that I agree to the conditions described below and will be bound by each of the terms of the Credit Card Agreement, including arbitration. MBNA America Bank, N.A. (MBNA) is authorized to check my credit, employment history or any other information and to report to others such information and credit experience with me. If I do not qualify for the NEA *Platinum Plus* account, I will automatically be considered for the NEA School Days account. I understand that the acceptance or use of any card issued will be subject to the terms of this application and the Credit Card Agreement that will be sent with the card, and agree to be responsible for all charges incurred according to such terms. I am at least 18 years of age. By signing this application, I certify that I am a member or in the family of an NEA member in good standing of the National Education Association. I consent to and authorize MBNA America Bank, N.A. and MBNA's affiliates to monitor and/or record my telephone conversations with their representatives or the representatives of any of those companies. I accept that MBNA may, at its discretion, periodically consider any account for an automatic upgrade. **Information about me or my account may be shared among MBNA Corp. and its subsidiaries for marketing or administrative purposes. I may prohibit such sharing of information, other than information pertaining solely to transactions or experiences between me and MBNA (or its subsidiaries), by writing to MBNA at P.O. Box 15342, Wilmington, DE 19850 and including my name, address, home phone number and the applicable MBNA account number(s).**

X *Signature Date

†Annual Percentage Rate (APR)	NEA *Platinum Plus* account: 15.99% for purchases; NEA School Days account: 16.99% for purchases.
Annual Fee	None.
Grace Period for Repayment of Balances for Purchases	At least 25 days from statement closing date.
Method of Computing the Balance for Purchases	Average daily balance (including new transactions).
Transaction Fee for Purchases	Transaction fee for the purchase of wire transfers, money orders, bets, lottery tickets, and casino gaming chips: 2% of each such purchase; $2 minimum, $10 maximum.
Transaction Fee for Cash Advances and Fees for Paying Late or Exceeding the Credit Limit	Transaction fee for Bank and ATM cash advances: 2% of each cash advance; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. Transaction fee for credit card cash advance checks and balance transfers: 1% of each cash advance; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. Late Payment Fee: $25. Over-the-Credit-Limit Fee: $25.

†The current promotional APR offer for cash advance checks and balance transfers made with either account is 2.9% through your first four statement closing dates commencing the month after your account is open. Thereafter, the APR that will be applied to those new and outstanding cash advance check and balance transfer transactions will be 15.99% for the NEA *Platinum Plus* account or 16.99% for the NEA School Days account. Cash advances and balance transfers may not be used to pay down or pay off any MBNA® issued account. **MBNA may allocate your payments to balances (including new transactions) with lower APRs before balances with higher APRs. Cash advances obtained through a Bank or ATM transaction are not eligible for the promotional 2.9% APR offer.**

††A "fixed" Annual Percentage Rate (APR) means that the APR will not vary in accordance with changes in a formula, such as the U.S. Prime Rate. MBNA reserves the right to change the APR, in accordance with the Credit Card Agreement and the laws of the State of Delaware and the Federal Truth in Lending Act.

‡Certain restrictions apply to these and other benefits described in the benefits brochure which is sent soon after your account is opened. NEA School Days Card Customer benefits differ from those available with the NEA *Platinum Plus* account, e.g., year-end summary of charges is available upon request; MasterPurchase Protection is not available and maximum Common Carrier Travel Accident Insurance coverage is up to $500,000; Credit lines run from $500 to $5,000, while *Platinum Plus* credit lines are from $5,500 to $100,000.

The NEA is not involved in the credit decision process. All applications will be subject to a confidential standard review by MBNA America.

Absolutely NO membership dues are used to market this program.

MBNA America Bank, N.A. is the exclusive issuer and administrator of the *Platinum Plus* credit card program.

The NEA Credit Card Program® has been developed for NEA members and their families only. If a member decides not to renew membership, that person and their family will no longer be eligible to receive the preferred rates and fees offered through the NEA Credit Card Program. If eligible, a replacement card will be offered. Any account opened in response to this offer will be governed by the laws of Delaware.

The information about the costs of the cards described in this application is accurate as of 6/00. The information may have changed after that date. To find out what may have changed, call MBNA at (888) 758-7946. TTY users please call (800) 833-6262.

MBNA® MBNA America® and *Platinum Plus* are service marks of MBNA America Bank, N.A. MasterCard® and MasterPurchase® are federally registered service marks of MasterCard International Inc., used pursuant to license.

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Mail your signed application to: NEA Credit Card Program; c/o MBNA America Bank, N.A.; P.O. Box 981054; El Paso, TX 79998-9937

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Talk Magazine - 12 iss	12	EQTAX	$18.00	$12.00
Teen	12	W9JK	$11.97	$ 9.97
Teen People	10	JPEH3	$12.78	$ 9.96
Tennis	10	TXQF	$18.00	$12.00
This Old House	10	EWXG7	$19.95	$11.96
Time - 52 iss	52	6KAN	$67.33	$49.95
Time - 17 iss	17	6KYF	$22.01	$15.72
Time - Large Print - 27 iss	27	AMHVY	$40.25	$40.25
Travel Holiday	10	VBGX	$17.94	$ 8.97
TravelAmerica	6	6JFX	$23.94	$11.97
TV Guide	52	KAEW	$56.68	$47.99
U.S. News	52	YCBJ	$44.75	$30.00
US Weekly - 26 iss	26	3NA8	$26.00	$15.96
USA Today - 65 iss	65	YJHJ	$39.00	$35.75
UTNE Reader	6	YQF3	$19.97	$14.97
Vanity Fair	12	R9JQ	$20.00	$15.00
Vegetarian Journal	6	PHPT	$20.00	$15.00
Vibe	10	QTDP	$11.95	$ 9.95
Victoria	12	RHN48	$21.97	$15.00
Vogue	12	WTK8	$28.00	$17.97
Walking	6	MTF3	$14.95	$11.95
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Woman's Day	17	BCDP	$17.97	$8.99
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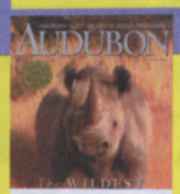

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